

**'VERILY, WE HAVE REVEALED THE
THIKR (Qur'aan) AND WE ARE ITS
GUARDIANS.'**

-QUR'AAN

THE QUR'AAN

UNIMPEACHABLE



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INTRODUCTION

This treatise is in refutation of the booklet, “Evidence for the Collection of the Qur’aan”, written by one Christian missionary, Mr. John Gilchrist. The booklet of Gilchrist is merely a page from the long Christian history of abortive attempts to assail the integrity and authenticity of the Qur’aan Shareef. But, as all previous Christian writers and other enemies of Islam have failed in the attempt to blacken the glory of the Qur’aan’s glittering authenticity, so too, does Gilchrist follow suit. He has miserably failed in his scheme.

Gilchrist tries to compare the bible with the Qur’aan in regard to authenticity. To say the least, this claim is laughable. This is not the occasion to present argument for the refutation of this fallacy. If Allah wills, a separate treatise shall be prepared to adequately expose the fallacy of the comparison of the bible with the Qur’aan Majeed.

Despite his dilatory ramblings directed against the Qur’aan Majeed, Gilchrist is constrained by the I’jaaz and the Divine nature of the Qur’aan Hakeem to droop his head and feebly confess:

“... whereas the Qur’aan may have been remarkably transcribed, even to the point of inerrancy, from the time of Uthman...”

“Remarkably transcribed even to the point of inerrancy” is indeed a remarkable, if not gracious, confession from a man set out to denigrate the authenticity of the Qur’aan Majeed. Gilchrist is not the solitary soul among the non-Muslim critics of the Qur’aan who have conceded the remarkable authenticity of the Qur’aan Shareef. Many other hostile critics have conceded, albeit reluctantly, the high degree of accuracy and authenticity of the glorious Qur’aan. No book can ever hope to

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compare with the Qur'aan Majeed in authenticity and in “inerrancy” of transcription.

No matter how hard the detractors of the Qur'aan blow their trumpets, they cannot achieve their heart's desire and aim of faulting the authenticity of the Qur'aan. It is for this reason that we find repeated attempts by Christian writers to sully the Qur'aan's authenticity. But, each time an attempt is made, failure is the result, hence the attempt is renewed by another adversary of the Qur'aan. But, all such attempts are perpetually doomed to failure for the Qur'aan Majeed declares:

“They desire to blow out the Noor of Allah with their mouths. But, Allah will complete His Noor even though the kaafiroon detest it.”

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IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MOST MERCIFUL

Inspite of his desperate and abortive endeavors to show that the Qur'aan – e – Hakeem is not authentic and that the Qur'aan Shareef has suffered the same fate as the Bible in regard to distortion, interpolation and deletion, John Gilchrist has been constrained to make the following admission:

“This booklet contains a brief historical survey of the collection of the Qur'aan text from the time of Muhammad's death until the caliphate of Uthmaan when the text was finally standardized into the form in which it appears today.”

(Page i- Gilchrist's brochure on the Qur'aan)

In fact Gilchrist's contentions are all supposedly based on the developments during the period stated in the aforementioned paragraph of Gilchrist's booklet, hence he says on the cover of his brochure:

“A study of the textual history of the Qur'aan from the death of Muhammad to the Caliphate of Uthmaan,”

From this statement and the abovementioned admission made by Gilchrist, the following facts are of great significance:

The supposed changes (supposed by Gilchrist) which occurred in the Qur'aan Shareef were wrought in the period from the death of Muhammad (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) until Uthmaan's Khilaafat.

Since the time of the Khilaafat of Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) to this day there exists the “standardized form” of the Qur'aan Shareef. In other words, Gilchrist concedes at least this much that the Qur'aan which the World of Islam possesses and reads today is the same Standard Form which was “finally standardized” by Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu).

The demise of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) occurred in the year 632 of the Christian Era and the demise of Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) happened in 656 of the Christian Era (C.E.). Thus, the period from the demise of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) to the demise of Hadhrat Uthmaan

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(Radiallahu anhu) was a duration of a mere 24 years. But for the purpose of our discussion this period shrinks to a mere 14 years since the event of the standardization of the Qur'aan Shareef by Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) took place in about 26 Hijri (646 C.E.) after the Conquest of Armenia by the forces of Islam.

These facts lead to the conclusion that the contended change and interpolation (supposed by Gilchrist) occurred during these 14 years. At the end of this brief period, the process of interpolation was effectively halted by Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) who arranged the Standardized Copy of the Qur'aan Shareef – the very same version we possess to this day, a fact which Gilchrist himself concedes in his statement:

.. until the caliphate of Uthmaan when the text was finally standardized into the form in which it appears today.”

Insha'Allah, it shall be shown later that the ‘Standardized Form’ in our possession is the very Qur'aan which existed during the time of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) – the Qur'aan which Nabi – e – Kareem (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and all the Sahaabah recited. There is absolutely no difference in the Version which the Ummah recites today and in the Version which Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) recited. However, before proceeding to negate and neutralize the baseless claims and assertions of Gilchrist pertaining to the supposed change which occurred in the brief span of 14 years, it is necessary to draw attention to the admission of Gilchrist – an admission which knocks out the very bottom of his contention that the Qur'aan is not authentic. It is Gilchrist's claim that the Qur'aan Shareef has been altered and the Qur'aan in our possession today is not the whole of the Qur'aan which existed during the time of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam). But, his claim contains an absurd contradiction in that he concedes the authenticity of the Version standardized by Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) while denying the irrefutable fact that the “Uthmaan” version is none other than the very Version which existed in the time of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi

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wasallam). In conceding that the Qur'aan which we have today in our possession is the “text” which was “standardized into the form in which it appears today” by Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) more than 1400 hundred years ago, Gilchrist is guilty by implication of the ludicrous claim that while the Qur'aan Shareef withstood the ravages and vicissitudes of fourteen hundred years (from the time of Uthmaan –Radiallahu anhu – to the present) and retained the authenticity bestowed by Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu), it (the Qur'aan) failed to maintain its originality during the short period of 14 years (from the demise of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) – to the time when it was standardized by Hadhrat Uthmaan – (Radiallahu anhu). This conclusion is absurd to the extreme. No unbiased and intelligent person can be prepared to accept that the Qur'aan inspite of withstanding the ravages of 14 centuries in maintaining its form (as standardized by Uthmaan) lacked the ability to perform this same feat of maintaining its authenticity in the short period of 14 years.

How is it possible for the Qur'aan to have been so well preserved for 14 centuries and on the admission of Gilchrist himself the very form standardized by Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) “appears today”, but could not be preserved in the form handed down by Muhammad (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) for only 14 years?

If the process of interpolation and deletion had set in after the demise of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam), how was this supposed process arrested and eliminated to give rise to a Qur'aanic version which held its originality and authenticity for fourteen centuries – from the time of Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) to this day? The following facts should not escape the seeker of the truth:

- i) After the demise of Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) the process of the initiation of deviated sects set in. Groups inimical to the Sahaabah and the true teachings of Islam reared their heads.

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- ii) A great number of Sahaabah had already departed from this world.
- iii) In contrast, the number of the Sahaabah living during the fourteen years from the demise of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) to the occasion of the “standardization” of the Qur'aan Shareef was greater.

Keeping in mind these facts, it can never be accepted that inspite of the Qur'aan retaining its originality (the “form standardized” by Uthmaan) for 14 long centuries when all the Sahaabah, the first students, scribes and teachers of the Qur'aan, had departed and deviated sects sprang up, it (the Qur'aan Shareef) lost its authenticity in the very first fourteen years after the demise of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam), a period in which all the Sahaabah existed. If the first Scribes – those who memorized the whole Qur'aan under the supervision of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) – and the first Students of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had failed to preserve the originality and the authenticity of the Qur'aan Shareef in the first 14 years, then how was it possible for the Ummah of Islam to have retained the authenticity of the Uthmaani Version for such a long period of 14 centuries when so many forces inimical to Islam were arraigned against the Qur'aan and Islam? If this feat could have been accomplished by those not directly connected with the Qur'aan (i.e. non-Sahaabah), what is the difficulty which precluded those directly connected to the Qur'aan (viz., the Sahaabah) to have retained the authenticity of Muhammad's Version for a mere 14 years? Intelligence will not accept Gilchrist's claim to be rational.

Gilchrist has named his brochure: *“Evidences for the Collection of the Qur'aan”*. On the basis of these “evidences” he seeks to refute the authenticity of the Qur'aan Shareef. But all such “evidences” are confined to the initial fourteen-year period when all the Sahaabah and authorities of the Qur'aan were alive and propagating the Qur'aan, its teachings and recital, exactly as they had obtained it from Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam). In the attempt to negate the authenticity of the Qur'aan Shareef, Gilchrist has been compelled to ignore

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fourteen centuries which have passed over the Qur'aan-e-Hakeem – fourteen hundred years which saw no change overcoming the Qur'aan according to even Gilchrist who has been constrained by the miraculous nature of the Qur'aan to proclaim the authenticity of this Divine Book in the following words, albeit inadvertently:

“...the collection of the Qur'aan text from the time of Muhammad's death until the caliphate of Uthmaan when the text was finally standardized into the form in which it appears today (fourteen hundred years after the event).”

(NB: Words in brackets are ours).

If the Qur'aan has undergone change as the Bible has according to Gilchrist, then why has he overlooked fourteen centuries of the Qur'aan's history? If the process of interpolation and deletion supposedly wrought in the Qur'aan was initiated after the demise of Muhammad (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam), why did this process not continue after the 14 years when it was “finally standardized into the form in which it appears today”? What hidden and mysterious power preserved the authenticity and originality of the “standardized” version for full fourteen hundred years? Insha'Allah, it shall be shown that the form standardized during the time of Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) was the very same form which existed during the time of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam). It now devolves on us to produce the proof to establish this claim. Once it has been substantiated that the Version recited by Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) is the very same Version adopted during the Khilaafat of Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu), then Gilchrist will have no rational option other than conceding the authenticity of the Qur'aan since he has already admitted that the form of the Qur'aan standardized by Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) is the very same form which is in our possession today.

MUSLIM ATTITUDE TO THE TEXT OF THE QUR'AAN

Gilchrist says on page 1 of his brochure:

“It is universally believed throughout the Muslim world that the Qur'aan in circulation today is precisely that which Allah revealed to Muhammad, that nothing whatsoever has been changed, that no passage has been omitted from the text, that no man added to it, and that, down to the last letter, it has been preserved intact by the power of God.”

This is precisely what Muslims claim. The Qur'aan is the Divine and Eternal Truth. The Qur'aan in our possession is the very Qur'aan- down to the last letter – which was revealed to Muhammad (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Over fourteen centuries of time attests to the authenticity and the unchanged form of the Qur'aan. Friend and foe alike bear testimony to the Eternal and Unaltered Truth of the Qur'aan. Gilchrist's laments and baseless comparison with the Bible will never alter the irrefutable authenticity of the Qur'aan. We contend without the slightest fear of contradiction that nothing whatever has been added to or deleted from the Qur'aan. Whatever “proof” and “evidence” Gilchrist has adduced in his brochure to refute the claim of Islam will, Insha'Allah, be demolished.

THE DIACRITICAL SIGNS IN THE QUR'AAN

On page 2 of his brochure, Gilchrist asserts:

“... and yet the history of the Qur'aan text shows that diacritical points distinguishing the Arabic consonants and the relative vowel points were only introduced at least two hundred years after Muhammad's death. The earliest Qur'aans, in kufic and other scripts, all had only seventeen consonants (whereas the Arabic letters distinguished by diacritical points etc. today number twenty-nine) and none were accompanied by vowel points.”

It is abundantly clear from the above line of reasoning adopted by Gilchrist that he is totally in the dark regarding the claim

which Islam makes in relation to the Qur'aan. By the QUR'AAN is meant the REVELATION to Muhammad (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The Qur'aan is that Speech of Allah Ta'ala which was revealed to Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam). And, it is our claim that the very Speech revealed to Muhammad (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) – known as the Qur'aan – is intact to this day. It has not suffered the slightest bit of alteration. The Qur'aan as recited in this day is EXACTLY the Qur'aan which was recited by Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam). It is a self-evident fact that the Qur'aan was not revealed in the written form. The Divine Revelation was transmitted verbally by Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) to the Sahaabah. The insertion of diacritical points is exactly in the same category as the insertion of the letters of the Arabic alphabet. Like the letters of the Arabic alphabet (i.e. the written characters) produce the sounds and pronunciations of the Speech of the Revelation, so too, do the diacritical points and signs. The diacritical points and signs are in a similar category as the written representatives of the Arabic letters, viz, the Huroof. These Huroof in the first instance or in actual fact are pronunciations, not written forms. The written forms merely represent the actual sounds produced by the “letters”, the Huroof.

If a verbal statement is committed to writing and the form of the writing is such as to produce exactly the same statement which was spoken – not the meaning of the statement, but the actual words spoken – then such writing can by no stretch of intelligent reasoning be interpreted as an addition or a change to the spoken words. Yes, if in the written words such a change has been introduced to bring about a variation between the spoken statement and the written statement, then undoubtedly, the claim of alteration will be valid. But, in the total absence of any variation between the spoken words and the written words, the claim of alteration is unfounded and absurd.

In the Qur'aanic Revelation, not only diacritical signs and points were absent, even written consonants representing the sounds of the consonant letters were absent since the Qur'aan

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was not revealed in written characters. Thus, if Gilchrist insists that the inclusion of diacritical signs and vowel points represents alteration in the Qur'aan, then in terms of the same line of reasoning he will have to expand his denial of the Qur'aan's authenticity by claiming that the Qur'aan in the written form – even the supposedly “only seventeen consonants” represent change and addition to the original Qur'aan revealed to Muhammad (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam). But, the absurdity of such a claim is manifest.

It has never been claimed by Muslims that the exactness and precision of the Qur'aan in circulation today to that of the Revealed Qur'aan incorporate the tangible or material component parts of the Book such as the physical pages, the ink, the lines drawn in the Book, the calligraphic inscriptions, the decoration, etc. The exactness of the Qur'aan Shareef in circulation today compares with the exactness of the Revelation with great precision. Thus, the Qur'aanic words which are recited today by the Ummah of Islam are the exact and precise words which were revealed to Muhammad (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam), and the exactness which we are contending refers not only to recital, but to content matter as well, i.e. the whole of the revealed Qur'aan excluding the Mansukhut Tilaawah (abrogated recital) Aayaat (abrogated By Allah Ta'ala Himself, not by any follower of Islam). This aspect will be discussed later in greater detail.

The appearance of diacritical signs and points (fathah, kasrah, dhammah, jazm, etc.) is similar to the appearance of the alphabetical letters (the Huroof) in the written text of the Qur'aan – e – Hakeem. Just as written letters are non-existent in the Qur'aanic Wahi (Revelation) so too are diacritical points and signs absent. Just as alphabetical letters are employed to produce sound and pronunciation, so too, are diacritical signs and points utilized in the Qur'aanic written text to produce sound and pronunciation. The Arabic Huroof (alphabetical letters) are mere symbols or characters used to represent sound and the diacritical signs, in the same way, are symbols or characters which represent the vowel sounds. In having

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inserted diacritical signs in the written text, no new sound or new word or new phrase has been added to the Qur'aan. The recited word in Arabic is exactly the same whether diacritical signs and points are included or excluded from the text.

The diacritical signs and points are merely part of a system of handwriting which represent the original uttered or verbal statement. A Haafiz reciting the Qur'aan from memory recites in exactly the same way as a person who recites from the text observing the diacritical signs and points. There is absolutely no difference in the actual recital which is what the actual Qur'aan is. The original form of the Qur'aan Shareef is verbal recital, not written characters which merely are representative of the actual revealed and verbal Qur'aan.

A statement taken down in stenography (any system of shorthand writing) is not an addition or interpolation of the original statement. When the statement recorded in shorthand is read or recited it will compare in exactness to the original verbal expression. Therefore, the claim that the diacritical signs and points represent an addition to the Qur'aan is utterly nonsensical.

If the diacritical signs and points produced any variation in the recital of the Qur'aan or if thereby a new word, letter or phrase was introduced into the text, then Gilchrist would have had a valid argument. But, since not a single new letter has been introduced by these signs and points, the fallacy of Gilchrist's argument is manifest.

In written Arabic, the diacritical signs and points are not normally inserted. These signs have been inserted only to facilitate correct recitation by non-Arabic speaking Muslims, just as the entire Revealed Qur'aan has been inserted between two covers on pages, in the written form, to facilitate authentic preservation. The purpose of such signs is merely to ensure that the written text is recited in exactly the same way as the revealed Words of the Qur'aan. The charge of interpolation or addition is therefore absurd. How can the diacritical points and signs be interpreted as an addition when their only function is

to enable and ensure exactness and correctness of recitation? By what stretch of imagination and line of reasoning can it be honestly claimed that these signs are additions to the Qur'aan when they merely uphold the exactness of the Revealed Qur'aan? How can any sensible man argue that such signs and symbols are additions to the Qur'aan when they produce not the slightest variation in the recitation of the Qur'aan?

To sum up: the diacritical signs are only symbols which represent the vowel sounds in the same way as the other characters of the Arabic alphabet are symbols representing the consonant sounds. The non-appearance of the diacritical signs in early written texts of the Qur'aan was merely in line with the style of Arabic writing which omits the vowel 'sounds' in the written text, but not in the spoken words.

THE CLAIM OF 17 AND 29 LETTERS OF THE ARABIC ALPHABET

Gilchrist asserts:

“The earliest Qur'aans, in kufic and other scripts all had only seventeen consonants (whereas the Arabic letters distinguished by diacritical points, etc., today number twenty-nine) and none were accompanied by vowel points.”

This statement seeks to convey the impression that the Arabic language in which the Qur'aan Shareef was revealed consisted of only seventeen consonants and no vowels and that the vowels were later accretions. By implication the reader is asked to form the conclusion that since the vowels and even further consonants were incorporated into the Arabic language centuries after the revelation of the Qur'aan, new phonetic sounds were introduced into the Arabic language. Since such “new phonetic sounds” represented by the diacritical signs and points, etc, are employed in the Qur'aanic written text, it has to follow that the Qur'aan in circulation today cannot be exactly the same as the revealed words of the Qur'aan which descended to Muhammad (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam). An ignoramus and

a person not versed with the Arabic language will swallow such drivel and baseless assumptions which are nothing but false.

The Arabic language always had the same number of letters i.e. actual letters, the sounds and the pronunciations. The idea that an extra 12 letters were incorporated into the Arabic language centuries after the revelation of the Qur'aan-e-Kareem is blatantly false. It has already been explained earlier that the actual and the original way of writing Arabic is without the diacritical points and signs which represent the vowel sounds and some other consonants. But, while the verbal statements may be reduced to the written form with characters which all seem to amount to only "seventeen consonants", the conclusion that there were only seventeen consonants in the Arabic language of the early days is erroneous. This erroneous conclusion stems from being ignorant of the Arabic language. Those versified with Arabic will not read the written statement with only seventeen consonants. The diacritical points and distinguishing dots will be employed mentally to produce the correct vowel and consonant sounds. But, one ignorant of Arabic will labour under the false notion that there are only "seventeen consonants" – no vowels and no other consonants other than those understood by Gilchrist. For example if the ب(*Baa*), ت(*Taa*) and ث(*thaa*) are written without their respective distinguishing dots, it does not follow that the ط is neither a *Baa*, nor *taa* nor *Thaa*. In the same way it does not follow that the absence of dots has reduced the number of consonants. It was only expected of the Arabs to recite correctly. Their mastery over their language enabled them to distinguish the various letters and to include the correct vowel sounds without the external aid of diacritical points, signs and dots which were introduced for the prime purpose of assisting non-Arabic-speaking people to recite the Qur'aan in exactly the same way as the Revealed Words.

The introduction of additional symbols to distinguish the consonants and to indicate the correct position of the vowel sounds in no way constitutes an addition to the Qur'aan since such distinguishing marks and dots do not result in the

introduction of additional sounds, letters or words. Since no variation what so ever is wrought in the recital of the Revealed Qur'aan by the inclusion of these distinguishing dots and symbols , the claim of addition to the Qur'aan advanced by Gilchrist is false.

THE EFFORT AND ENDEAVOUR OF THE UMMAH IN THE PRESERVATION OF THE ORIGINALITY OF THE QUR'AAN ARE MANIFESTATIONS OF THE DIVINE WILL TO SAFEGUARD THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE QUR'AAN SHAREEF

Confronted by the indisputable fact that no book on earth enjoys originality and authenticity as the Qur'aan, Gilchrist attempts to argue the insignificance of this fact. He thus says on page 2 of his brochure:

“No amount of human effort, no matter how remarkably punctilious or scrupulous it may be, can be adduced as proof of a divine miracle.”

In relation to the preservation of the authenticity of the Qur'aan the super-human effort and endeavours of the Ummah of Islam are indeed the reflections of the Divine Miracle to maintain the authenticity of the Qur'aan-e-Hakeem. The seeker of the truth will naturally ask. Why does no book (other than the Qur'aan) enjoy the same high degree of total authenticity and exactness as the Qur'aan? Why is it possible that the Qur'aan enjoys the unique and miraculous capacity of it being memorized by millions of people throughout its history-memorized in exactly the same form as it was revealed, and not with only “seventeen consonants” and not without vowel sounds as the arguments of Gilchrist convey to an unwary person? Why has it not been possible to memorize any other book – Divine or otherwise word-for-word, letter for letter, in entirety? Why could Jews not safeguard the authenticity of their Scripture and why could the Christians not protect the authenticity of their Bible? Why has this unique feat been accomplished by only the followers of Islam? This all indicates the workings of Divine Power. In spite of the ravages of time, the passing of fourteen hundred years,

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the spiritual and mundane decline of Muslims, the subjugation of the Muslim people and their lands by foreigners inimical to Islam, the initiation of organized conspiracies on governmental basis by the foes of Islam to print false copies of the Qur'aan and distribute among the illiterate masses of Muslims, the lack of technological methods of printing, etc, we find that the Qur'aan has maintained its authenticity. If the prejudiced Mr. Gilchrist intransigently wishes to maintain his baseless charge against the Qur'aan Shareef which according to him was altered in the first 14 years after the demise of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam), then at least he has conceded, albeit inadvertently, that the present Qur'aan in circulation today is the very same Qur'aan which was "standardized" by Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu). Here is a Book which on the admission of Gilchrist himself has withstood the ravages and vicissitudes of fourteen centuries. Here is a book which millions of Muslims recite in exactly the same form as handed down to them according to Gilchrist some fourteen hundred years ago, from the time of Uthmaan's Khilaafat which was only a decade or so after the demise of Muhammad (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam). What is that power which has kept intact the authenticity of this Book which even Gilchrist acknowledges dates back to the time of Uthmaan some fourteen centuries ago? Intelligence will answer that it is only Divine Power – a Divine Miracle which transmitted this Book so safely and so intact down the passage of fourteen hundred years. Indeed, Gilchrist will curse himself for letting the cat out of the bag, for he has admitted that the Qur'aan in circulation today is:

“.... The Qur'aan text from the time of Muhammad's death until the caliphate of Uthmaan when the text was finally standardized into the form in which it appears today.”

From Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) to the present..fourteen centuries... and the same "standardized" text remains intact and authentic in its original form!!! What greater evidence does Mr. Gilchrist need as testimony for the Divine Miracle guarding the Qur'aan Shareef?

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On page 2 of his brochure, Gilchrist states:

“As we analyze the history of the text of the Qur'aan we will find that, like the Bible, it has suffered from variant readings and other vagaries, notwithstanding the fact that it has been carefully preserved as a whole.”

In fact, an analysis of the history of the Qur'aan Shareef will indicate the opposite of what Gilchrist is out to achieve. Unlike the Bible, the Qur'aan never suffered from unauthorized variant readings as the above statement of Gilchrist tends to assert. Furthermore, the vagaries which reduced the original Bible to the man-made book it is now, never overtook the Qur'aan-e-Hakeem. Gilchrist's claim is wishful thinking which cannot be substantiated with facts and historical evidence. Whereas the Bible truly suffered under the axe of interpolation, wholesale addition and deletion, the Qur'aan has remained in its original form without the addition or deletion of a single letter. The comparison between the Qur'aan and Bible presented by Gilchrist is, therefore, ludicrous and just cannot be borne out by evidence.

In substantiation for his claim that the Qur'aan “suffered from variant readings” like the Bible, Gilchrist tenders the following narration:

“Hudhaifa was afraid of their (the people of Sha'm and Iraq) differences in the recitation of the Qur'aan so he said to Uthmaan, ‘O Chief of the Believers! Save this nation before they differ about the Book (Qur'aan) as Jews and the Christians did before.’ So Uthmaan sent a message to Hafsa, saying, ‘Send us the manuscript of the Qur'aan so that we may compile the Qur'aan materials in perfect copies and return the manuscripts to you.’ Hafsa sent it to Uthmaan. Uthmaan then ordered Zaid bin Thabit, Abdullah bin az-Zubair, Sa'id bin al-As, and Abdur-Rahman bin Harith bin Hisham to rewrite the manuscripts in perfect copies. Uthmaan said to the three Quraishi men, ‘In case you disagree with Zaid bin Thabit on any point in the Qur'aan, then write it in the dialect of Quraish as the Qur'aan was revealed in their tongue’. They did so, and

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when they had written many copies, Uthmaan returned the original manuscripts to Hafsa. Uthmaan sent to every Muslim province one copy of what they had copied, and ordered that all the other Qur'aanic materials, whether written in fragmentary manuscripts or whole copies, be burnt.” (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 6, p.479)

Commenting on the aforementioned narration, Gilchrist states:

“This tradition informs us quite clearly that other manuscripts of the Qur'aan, some in sections, others complete, had been written out and that they were in use elsewhere in the conquered territories. Uthmaan's order that they should be burnt indicates that there were serious textual differences between them and the manuscript in Hafsa's possession.”

The following narration gives a clearer explanation of the event mentioned in the Hadith of Bukhaari:

“While participating in Jihaad along the Armenian front I observed the people of Shaam reciting according to the Qira'at of Ubay Bin Ka'b (Radiallahu anhu), but the people of Iraq have not heard of this Qira'at. The people of Iraq were reciting according to the Qira'at of Abdullah Bin Mas'ud (Radiallahu anhu), but the people of Shaam have not heard of this Qira'at. In consequence (of this mutual ignorance of the other's Qira'at) the one group was branding the other as kaafir.”

This narration establishes the following facts:

1. The people of Shaam were reciting in accordance with the Qira'at of Ubay Bin Ka'b (Radiallahu anhu).
2. The people of Iraq adhered to the Qira'at of Abdullah Bin Mas'ud (Radiallahu anhu).
3. The two forms of Qira'at (Recitation) were imparted by two senior authorities of Qira'at, who were both senior Sahaabah.
4. As a result of the one group being ignorant of the official and authentic Qira'at of the other group, mutual disputes arose. The one group labored under the impression that the other

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group had adopted an innovatory and unofficial form of Qira'at.

The facts in this as well as other Hadith narrations clearly reveal that the “differences” in the recitals of various people were all official, authorized and divine forms which were taught by Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) to the Sahaabah who in turn imparted their knowledge of Qira'at to their students. Both Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud and Ubay Bin Ka'b (Radiallahu anhumaa) were senior Sahaabah and authorities of Qira'at who were authorized and qualified to teach Qira'at. Thus, the “variant” forms of recitation which they imparted to their respective students and disciples were not innovatory and can never be branded as being additions to the Qur'aan. Their forms of Qira'at were sanctioned by Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) who said that the Qur'aan was revealed in seven forms (Sab'at-e-Ahruf). This may be news to Gilchrist, but to Muslims and even those foes of Islam who have studied the history of the Qur'aan are aware of this fact. Gilchrist cites the narration of Huzaifah (Radiallahu anhu) from Bukhaari to back up his claim of “variant” readings which he endeavours to trade as “additions” to the Qur'aan while just a few lines after the same narration in Bukhaari appears the narration speaking of the official and authoritative forms of recitation. At the end of the Hadith, Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) says:

*“Verily, this QUR'AAN was revealed in SEVEN FORMS”
Therefore, recite according to whatever form is easy of
it.”*

Numerous Hadith narrations and the history of the Qur'aan establish beyond any doubt that the “variant readings” which were employed in the early days were all sanctioned by Islam. All such forms of Qira'at were sanctioned by Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) himself. Such disputes as Gilchrist mentions existed even among the Sahaabah themselves during the very lifetime of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) since all the Sahaabah were not aware of ALL the different forms of Qira'at. However, whenever he would report to

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Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and obtain clarification and verification of the form which he had heard another Sahaabi reciting. The Hadith Kitaabs bear ample testimony to this fact.

Since the Qur'aan was revealed in different forms, it is ridiculous to claim that any one of these authorized forms represents an addition to the Qur'aan since our contention is that all the authorized “variant readings” are revealed and part of the Qur'aan. Yes, if Gilchrist asserts that the Qira'at of Ubay Bin Ka'ab or of Abdullah Bin Mas'ud or of any other authority of the Shariah is not among the authorized and sanctioned versions of the Qur'aan, then there would be a charge of interpolation. But, then Gilchrist should furnish his proof for such a charge. He does not possess the slightest shred of evidence to substantiate any such claim. The “variant readings” are accepted as the Qur'aan by Islam since all such “variant readings” were revealed forms. It is entirely another matter that all such “variant readings” have been discarded by the Ijma' (Unanimous Verdict) of the Ummah since the time of Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu). The official and divine form of Qira'at adopted by the Ijma' of the Sahaabah during the time of Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) exists with the Ummah today.

A brief history of the various forms of Qur'aanic recitals will assist readers to comprehend this issue better.

THE SEVEN AHRUF OF THE HOLY QUR'AAN

Among the many Ahadith mentioning the seven forms of the Qur'aan, the following is part of a Hadith recorded in Sahihul Bukhaari:

“Verily, this Qur'aan was revealed in seven forms. Therefore, recite according to whichever form is simple of it.”

In terms of the clear statements of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) Allah Ta'ala has permitted the Qur'aan to be recited in seven ways. In Manaahilul Irfaan, Vol. I, a narration reads

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that Hadhrat Jibraeel (alayhis salaam) informed Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam):

“Allah Ta’ala has ordered that your Ummah recite the Qur’aan in seven ways. Therefore, recitation in accordance with any one of these (seven) ways is correct.”

What is the meaning of SABA’AT-E-AHRUF (Seven Letters)? The authoritative Ulama of Islam have explained the meaning of the seven forms of recitation in detail. According to these authorities of Islam the revealed seven forms of Qira’at differ in seven ways. These differences among the revealed forms or “variant readings” are as follows:

1. Difference in the nouns in regard to singular, plural, masculine and feminine.

Example: One Qira’at has تَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ

Whereas another Qira’at state: تَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ

2. Differences of verbs with regard to the tense, eg. One Qira’at records رَبَّنَا بَاعِدْ بَيْنَ أَسْفَارِنَا; while another form of Recitation is

رَبَّنَا بَعْدَ بَيْنَ أَسْفَارِنَا

3. Differences in I’raab (Diacritical Signs), e.g. according to one Qira’at لَا يُضَارُّكَ رَبُّ ; while another Qira’at states: لَا يُضَارُّكَ رَبُّ.

Again, one Qira’at records دُؤَالْعَرْشِ الْمَجِيدِ; while another Qira’at proclaims دُؤَالْعَرْشِ الْمَجِيدُ .

4. Differences of word placement. In certain forms of Qira’at a word may appear posterior to another word in another Qira’at. وَجَاءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ and again anterior in yet another Qira’at. Example: وَجَاءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْحَقِّ بِالْمَوْتِ.

5. Differences in the number of words. One form of Qira’at may have a word more than another Qira’at.

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Example: تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ and تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ .

6. Substitution of words. A particular word in one Qira'at may be substituted with another word in another Qira'at, e.g. نَشْرُهَا and نَشْرُهَا .
7. Differences in Lahjah (tone of voice – accentuation). All the various qualities and rules of Tajweed come within the scope of differences in Lahjah. Example: in one Qira'at is recited مُوسَى ; in another Qira'at مُوسَى

The above explanation totally neutralizes the charge of interpolation brought by Gilchrist against the Qur'aan-e-Hakeem. The “variant readings” which Gilchrist has tendered in substantiation of his claim are in fact integral parts of the Qur'aan. They are revealed forms of Qira'at. Thus, the form of Ubay Bin Ka'b (Radiallahu anhu) and the way of Abdullah Bin Mas'ud (Radiallahu anhu) were not their own innovation, nor any new style introduced by anyone. Their forms of recitation which the people of Shaam and Iraq had adopted were among the Sab'at-e-Ahruf.

Another fact of great significance is that the variation – the revealed forms – in the forms of Qira'at does not create differences in the meanings of the Qur'aan Shareef.

In the beginning, because people were not generally acquainted with the style of the Qur'aan, permission was granted to recite according to any form of Qira'at. This concession and permission applied to the time of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the period immediately attendant to his demise. By “any form of Qira'at” means recitation within the confines of the Sab'at-e-Ahruf. It was the practice of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) to recite the entire Qur'aan once during the month of Ramadhan in the presence of Jibraeel (alayhis salaam). During the year of his demise, he recited the Qur'aan Majeed twice in the presence of Hadhrat Jibraeel (alayhis salaam). This last recitation is known

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as Arsah Akheerah. On this occasion many of the Qira'at forms were abrogated. Only those forms of Qira'at were retained which have been preserved to this day by way of Tawaatur Transmission (i.e. being narrated from generation to generation by way of an unbroken chain of authoritative transmission).

During his reign, Hadhrat Uthmaan (radhiallahu anhu) had seven copies of the Qur'aan Majeed compiled. In these seven copies all forms of Qira'at were conglomerated by deletion of the diacritical signs and points or dots (nikaat). The majority of the authorized forms of Qira'at was therefore incorporated into this Rasmul Khat (Mode of Writing) of the Qur'aan-e-Hakeem. Those forms of recitation which could not be incorporated into this Rasmul Khat were preserved in separated manuscripts. Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) ordered that a separated compilation be made for each form of Qira'at not contained in the Rasmul Khat of the initial seven copies.

The Ummah of Islam expended the greatest effort to learn, memorize and preserve the various forms of Qira'at (the "variant readings" mentioned by Gilchrist) so ably compiled and recorded by Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu). It was a direct result of this great and grand endeavor of the Ummah that the Knowledge of Qira'at developed into a well-established and independent science. Hundreds of Ulama and Huffaaz devoted their entire lives to the preservation of this science of Qira'at.

The very first step in this field was the momentous action instituted by Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) in the formulation of this science. With each compilation of the seven copies of the Qur'aan which he sent to different parts of the Islamic Empire, Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) despatched a qualified Qaari to impart the knowledge of Qira'at to others. These of Qira'at instructed people in the respective territories allocated to them, according to the form of recitation in which they specialized. The various forms of recitation were therefore disseminated extensively.

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The principle which has been universally accepted by the entire Ummah, right from the time of the Sahaabah was the fact that the Qira'at had to be proven to be a form of recitation of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The authenticity of the Qira'at had to be accredited by the Aimmah (Masters) of Qira'at. It is, therefore, abundantly clear that the “variant readings” were not and are not accretions to the Qur'aan Shareef, but all were accredited forms of Qira'at revealed to Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam). To prove his contention of the Qur'aan having “suffered” additions and variations, it is essential that Gilchrist present evidence of such variations which have not been accredited by the Sahaabah – in other words, he must prove that the “variant readings” about which he speaks were not revealed to Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam). And, in the process of furnishing such evidence, he must resort to the Ahaadith since he has chosen the Hadith narrations to disprove the authenticity of the Qur'aan Majeed.

THE WRITTEN QUR'AAN DURING THE LIFETIME OF RASULULLAH (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam)

Gilchrist alleges that the first copy of the Qur'aan Shareef compiled by the command of Hadhrat Abu Bakr Siddique (Radiallahu anhu) was not the full and complete Revelation in entirety. Pressing this claim, Gilchrist says:

“Zaid clearly knew the Qur'aan well but the suggestion that he knew it perfectly, and in its entirety, is contradicted by this statement attributed to him: So I started looking for the Qur'aan and collecting it from (what was written on) palm-leaf stalks, thin white stones and also from the men who knew it by heart, till I found the last Verse of the Surat at-Tauba (repentance) with Abi Khuzaima Al-Ansari, and I did not find it with anybody other than him. (Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 6, p.478)”

Retention of the Qur'aan Shareef in entirety in the memory of man is indeed an act of Allah Ta'ala. In spite of the great difficulty and marvel of the task, it is common knowledge that

millions of Muslims, from the childhood, accomplish this wonderful feat. Innumerable Huffaaz to this day exist, who can recite the Qur'aan Shareef in entirety from memory. When ordinary Muslims, even kids in the Ummah, possess the divinely bestowed ability to absorb the Qur'aan in entirety into their memories, what was the impossibility which could have precluded such a great Sahaabi as Zaid Bin Thaabit (Radiallahu anhu) from having memorized the Qur'aan in entirety? Zaid Bin Thaabit (Radiallahu anhu) was among the foremost of the Scribes who wrote down the Wahi (Qur'aanic Revelation) under the direct supervision of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Furthermore, Hadhrat Zaid has the distinction of being the only Sahaabi who listened to Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) recite the entire Qur'aan Majeed in the presence of Jibraeel (alayhis salaam) on the last occasion prior to Nabi-e-Kareem's (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) demise. There is not the slightest vestige of doubt in regard to Zaid's mastery of the Qur'aan. That he was a Haafiz of outstanding ability is a unanimous fact of the Ummah. The contrary has been posited by only Gilchrist and the enemies of Islam. Gilchrist has not furnished an iota of evidence to back up his claim. Besides wishful thinking and his personal opinion there is absolutely no evidence for the suggestion that Hadhrat Zaid Bin Thaabit (Radiallahu anhu) was not a full and perfect Haafiz of the Qur'aan. All the facts of the Ahadith which Gilchrist has taken to base his claims on, uphold the Ummah's view that Hadhrat Zaid (Radiallahu anhu) was among the best of Huffaaz. He knew the Qur'aan in entirety from memory.

Gilchrist presents the aforementioned Hadith of Bukhaari to bolster his suggestion regarding Hadhrat Zaid (Radiallahu anhu), and he claims that the said narration contradicts the view that Zaid (Radiallahu anhu) knew the Qur'aan perfectly and in its entirety. But, the Hadith in question in no way contradicts this claim. The Hadith does not even remotely suggest that Hadhrat Zaid (Radiallahu anhu) was an imperfect Haafiz. Hadhrat Zaid's search for the verses of the Qur'aan from various people and from written materials does not indicate that

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he did not know the Qur'aan perfectly and in its entirety. The “search” for the Qur'aanic Aayat was not the consequence of Hadhrat Zaid (Radiallahu anhu) not knowing the Qur'aan perfectly and in its entirety as Gilchrist has understood from Hadith. The task of compiling the Qur'aan Shareef in book form was indeed a momentous undertaking. So great was this task that Hadhrat Zaid commented:

“I take oath by Allah that if these two elders had imposed on me the task of washing some mountain, it would not have been as difficult as the task of compiling the Qur'aan Majeed.”

The most stringent measures were instituted to safeguard the originality and the authenticity of the Qur'aan Shareef. The Sahaabah never relied solely on the memory of any particular person nor on only memory for accomplishing this glorious and most difficult task. In spite of the existence of numerous perfect Huffaaz who knew the Qur'aan perfectly and in its entirety, other strict measures were adopted to corroborate the Qur'aan which was stored in the memories of the Sahaabah-e-Kiraam.

Hadhrat Zaid Bin Thaabit (Radiallahu anhu) being a perfect Haafiz could have written the Qur'aan from his own memory. Besides Zaid (Radiallahu anhu), hundreds of other Huffaaz were present. It was, therefore, relatively simple to have established an organization of Huffaaz for the purpose of writing the Qur'aan Majeed. Moreover, Hadhrat Zaid could have copied the Qur'aan from the various manuscripts which were written during the time of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam). However, he exercised great caution in this holy task. As a precautionary measure he did not content himself with any one particular method for compiling the Qur'aan Shareef. A number of measures were employed simultaneously to preserve the authenticity of the Qur'aanic text. The measures adopted were:

1. Firstly, Hadhrat Zaid (Radiallahu anhu) would verify a manuscript or a written recording of the Qur'aan by means of his own memory.

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2. Hadhrat Umar (Radiallahu anhu) who also was a Haafiz, was appointed jointly with Hadhrat Zaid (Radiallahu anhu) to accomplish this task. Hence, whenever some written verses of the Qur'aan were presented, both would verify and accept these jointly.
3. Two uprighteous and reliable witnesses had to bear testimony as to the authenticity of the verses. Only after the obtainal of such testimony under oath would the verses be accepted. This testimony applied to verses written under the direct supervision of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The witness had to testify that the verses were written in the presence of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam).
4. The verse thus accepted and recorded, would then be compared with the written records of various Sahaabah.

It will be clear from the foregoing explanation that the search conducted by Hadhrat Zaid (Radiallahu anhu) was just one of the measures which were adopted in the task of compiling the Qur'aan Shareef in book form. The search was one of the precautionary measures instituted and cannot be interpreted to mean that Hadhrat Zaid did not know the Qur'aan perfectly and in its entirety.

In the Hadith of Bukhaari cited by Gilchrist, the following statement of Hadhrat Zaid (Radiallahu anhu) appears:

".. till I found the last Verse of Surat at-Tauba (repentance) with Abi Khuzaima al-Ansari, and I did not find it with anybody other than him."

Gilchrist draws the following baseless conclusion from this statement:

"It was quite obviously a widespread search that Zaid conducted and the statement that one passage (Surah 9. 128-129) was found with only one man shows that no one knew the whole book by heart. He could not find another supposed hafiz who knew it."

Gilchrist draws heavily from the works of other non-Muslims to support his arguments which are in fact the argument of those inimical towards Islam. Although Gilchrist claims that his case

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is based on “evidences” from the Hadith, the conclusion which he has formed in regard to the aforementioned Hadith in Bukhaari Shareef is quite peculiar since he demonstrates colossal ignorance of the actual meaning of the statement of Hadhrat Zaid Bin Thaabit (Radiallahu anhu). Only a man totally ignorant of the Ahadith and the history of the Qur'aanic compilation will aver that since “the last verse of Surah Taubah was found with Abu Khuzaimah”, Zaid and the other Huffaaz were not perfect Huffaaz and did not know the Qur'aan perfectly. A study of the Hadith in question and its correct meaning show that the conclusion arrived at by Gilchrist is highly erroneous.

Keeping in mind the method of compiling the Qur'aan Majeed, viz., several methods were utilized simultaneously – confidence was not reposed in any one method – Zaid's statement regarding the last two verses of Surah Taubah becomes quite clear.

“I found the last two verses of Surah Baraa-ah only by Abu Khuzaimah and by none other.”

This statement does not mean that no one besides Abu Khuzaimah knew about these verses or that no one apart from Abu Khuzaimah had a written record of these verses. There were a number of Kaatibeen-e-Wahi (Scribes of Revelation) who wrote the Qur'aanic Revelation immediately after it was revealed and under the direct supervision of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Khuzaimah (Radiallahu anhu) was one such Scribe who wrote the Qur'aanic Aayaat under the direct supervision of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The meaning of the above statement of Hadhrat Zaid should now be very clear that among those who had written the verses under the direct command and supervision of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam), Khuzaimah was the only person from whom he (Zaid) found the last two verses of Surah Baraa-ah written.

It was known beyond the slightest shadow of doubt that these two verses were part of the Qur'aan. Hundreds of Sahaabah

knew the verses from memory. Furthermore, those Sahaabah who had in their possession the complete recording of the Qur'aan writing also had these particular verses in their written records. But, as far as having written them under the direct supervision of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) was concerned, only Abu Khuzaimah (Radiallahu anhu) had these verses.

The fact that Zaid (Radiallahu anhu) says that "I found the last verse ... and did not find it with anybody other than him", clearly indicates that Zaid had knowledge of these verses. If he did not have any such knowledge, he would have been surprised at having located the verses by Abu Khuzaimah and by no one else. Zaid's methods of compiling the Qur'aan were strict and they were pursued vigorously in setting the Qur'aanic verses to paper in a classified and arranged order. The statement of Hadhrat Zaid Bin Thaabit (Radiallahu anhu) only conveys that among the several measures adopted for acceptance of verses – to prove the authenticity of the verses beyond the slightest vestige of doubt – the application of one measure in relation to the last two verses of Surah Baraah was fulfilled by the written record of only Hadhrat Abu Khuzaimah (Radiallahu anhu). The statement of Zaid means nothing else apart from this. There is, therefore, no basis for the wishful thinking and baseless assumptions of Gilchrist in the Hadith cited by him.

THE QUR'AAN DURING THE LIFE AND AT THE END OF THE LIFE OF RASULULLAH (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam)

Gilchrist in his booklet seeks to forge the impression that even during the lifetime of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and at the end of his life the whole Qur'aan was not extant, much or part having been lost since there was no Qur'aan compiled in book form. In support of this contention he tenders the conclusions of western kuffaar scholars. He thus cites the following passage from Jeffrey's book, The Qur'aan as Scripture:

“To begin with, it is quite certain that when the Prophet died there was no collated, arranged body of material of his revelations. What we have is what could be gathered together somewhat later by the leaders of the community when they began to feel the need of a collection of the Prophet's proclamations, and by that time much of it was lost, and other portions could only be recorded in fragmentary form.”

This is the conclusion of an enemy of Islam. This conclusion unsubstantiated by fact is taken up by another enemy of Islam to support his contention that the Qur'aan is not authentic. But such wishful thinking presented by Islam's enemies does not constitute evidence. An unbiased study of the evidences pertaining to the Qur'aan, its revelation, writing, collection and preservation will refute the above-stated conclusion as totally unfounded. Let us now present the actual facts about the Qur'aanic revelation during the time of Rasulullah's (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) life.

THE HISTORY OF THE QUR'AANS PRESERVATION

The Preservation during the age of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)

It is a well-known fact that the Qur'aan Majeed was not revealed all at once, but the revelation was in piecemeal over a

period of years. The Qur'aan is the Revelation of Allah Ta'ala, which was sent to Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). We are not concerned of the opinions and beliefs of the kuffaar in this matter. Thus, no matter what the enemies of Islam believe in this regard, Muslims firmly believe that the FIRST, HIGHEST and MOST GUARDED treasury in which the Qur'aan Majeed was stored and protected here on earth was the gracious heart of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The kuffaar will allege that this is blind and irrational faith. So be it. We are not concerned with their claims and conclusions stemming from their kufr and malice for Islam. We are the slaves of Islam and the slaves of Allah. We are the believers in the Truth of Allah, hence we are not bothered by the accusations and slanders of the enemies of Allah and the enemies of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

A necessary corollary of Imaan is that Muslims believe that the first and most guarded treasury of the Qur'aan was the blessed heart and mind of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The Revelation of the Qur'aan was firmly, accurately and permanently impressed in the mind of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). This was the Treasury – the initial Treasury – into which the possibility of the slightest error, modification and change did not and could not enter. Allah declares in the Surah Qiyaamah:

“Most assuredly its (the Qur'aan's) compilation and its (correct) recitation are Our responsibility”

Besides Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) reciting the Qur'aan daily in abundance, annually he would recite the entire Qur'aan during the month of Ramadhaan to Jibraeel (alayhis salaam) who would listen to the recitation. During the year of Rasulullah's (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) demise, he recited the whole Qur'aan twice to Jibraeel (alayhis salaam).

In view of the presence of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) among the Sahaabah, there was absolutely no possibility of any part of the Qur'aan being lost during his lifetime. It is unreasonable and illogical to assert that any part

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of the Qur'aan could have been lost while Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) was alive. Yes, a kaafir may claim so since he does not at all believe in even the fact that Muhammad was the Rasool of Allah. There is, therefore, no surprise in a kaafir's rejection of the Qur'aan's authenticity. When a person does not believe in the Nubuwwat (Prophethood) of Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), then it is entirely too much and silly to expect him to believe in the Qur'aan being the divine book of Allah Ta'ala. But, anyone who initiates a discussion on the premiss that Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) was the Rasool of Allah cannot logically claim that any part of the Qur'aan was lost during the lifetime of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). If after having accepted the Nubuwwat of Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) any follower of Islam doubts the total preservation of the Qur'aan, it follows that his doubt is the consequence of him doubting in the very Nubuwwat of Nabi-e-Kareem (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). A logical and necessary corollary of accepting a man's Nubuwwat is the belief that Allah Ta'ala has chosen him and will be guarding His Word which is being revealed to the Nabi. It should be therefore quite simple to understand that during the lifetime of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) there existed not the slightest possibility of any part of the Qur'aan becoming lost or changed.

In writing his pamphlet to disprove the authenticity of the Qur'aan, Gilchrist has embarked on an exercise in futility and redundancy since he served absolutely no purpose thereby. If his motive in writing the pamphlet was to mislead Muslims, then he will fail miserably since a Muslim's Imaan is based on blind faith of the truth of Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). One who believes Muhammad to be the Rasool of Allah will dismiss Gilchrist's contentions as absurd and nonsense. If Gilchrist's motive is to convince Christians who may have inclined towards the opinion of the Qur'aan's authenticity, then his task would have been simpler if he merely pointed out to Christians that "Muhammad is not the Messenger of God" – Christians in fact do not accept his

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Prophethood – and that the “proclamations” of one who is not a “Prophet of God” cannot be Divine Revelation. There would then not have been any need for Gilchrist to have embarked on his futile exercise.

Let us revert to the facts of the preservation of the Qur'aan during the age of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The Sahaabah themselves were repositories of the preservation of the Qur'aan Majeed. Under the guidance, instruction and supervision of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) innumerable Sahaabah memorized the Qur'aan Shareef. Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) did not impart only the meanings of the Qur'aan to the Sahaabah. Great emphasis was accorded to correct recitation. In fact, correct meanings depend on correct recitation – on a text correctly preserved. In their eagerness to learn and memorize the Qur'aan, the noble Sahaabah vied with one another. Their fervor for the Qur'aan was so high and their enthusiasm was so great that some Sahaabiah (Female disciples of Rasulullah – (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) even compromised their mahr (marriage dowry) in lieu of their husbands teaching them the Qur'aan Majeed. Hundreds of Sahaabah devoted their whole lives to this purpose and pursuit. Not only did they memorize the Qur'aan, but at night they recited it in Salaat. This was no occasional practice among them. This was the practice daily.

Within a short while a large group of Sahaabah had committed the Qur'aan Majeed to memory. In this group, besides the four Khulafa-e-Raashideen, were such prominent Sahaabah as Talha, Sa'd, Ibn Mas'ud, Huzaifah Bin Yamaan, Saalim, Abu Hurairah, Abdullah Bin Umar, Abdullah Ibn Abbaas, Amr Bin al-A's, Abdullah Ibn Amr, Muaawiyah, Abdullah Ibn Zubair, Abdullah Ibn As-Sa'ib, Aishah, Hafsa, Umme Salmah and many others (Ridhwaanullaah alayhim). In the face of conclusive historical evidence indicating a very large body of Huffaaz among the Sahaabah, the following observation made by Gilchrist is fallacious:

“He (i.e. Hadhrat Zaid) could not find another supposed hafiz who knew it.”

Only a blind bigot and an enemy of Islam will hold the view that the institution of Hifz in Islam is a “supposed” entity. The open bias displayed by Gilchrist should be sufficiently convincing that he is in no position to discuss the subject impartially. Even kuffaar concede the real existence of the institution of Hifz among Muslims to this day. When thousands, nay millions, of Huffaaz exist in the world even after fourteen centuries of Islamic history, how unjust and absurd is it for Gilchrist to attempt a denigration of this institution! How can one claim that the Huffaaz in Rasulullah’s time were “supposed” Huffaaz when the world of Islam even today can boast of innumerable perfect Huffaaz? Gilchrist’s contention that there were no true and perfect Huffaaz among the Sahaabah is unsupported by historical facts and has to be dismissed as the wishful thinking of one who has no understanding of Islam and its institutions.

In the initial period of Islam, great emphasis was accorded to memorizing the Qur’aan since this was the most reliable method of preserving the Qur’aan. It was the most dependable and most efficacious way of guarding the Qur’aan in an age in which there was a dearth of writers and writing materials. If reliance had to be placed on writing for the guarding of the Holy Revelation, dissemination of the Qur’aan Majeed would not have been effected so extensively and intensively, neither would the process of preserving the Qur’aan have been so reliable. It is a well-known fact that the memorizing method is exclusive with the Qur’aan Majeed. All other previous scriptures did not enjoy the institution of Hifz, hence all were lost, interpolated and mutilated by their very followers. On the contrary, the Qur’aan, enjoying Divine Protection, was conferred with the blessing of this institution of Hifz which acted as the mundane agency for the preservation of the text in its original form and purity. Thus, the measure of Hifz is no ordinary method engineered by human mind. The role it played and plays in the preservation of the Qur’aan is so important and miraculous that it cannot be likened to non-Muslim kids swotting a few lines of poetry for school lessons. The efficiency and wonder of the agency of Hifz is of such staggering import

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that to this day, no enemy of Islam has succeeded in forging a text which could be accepted by the most ignorant, illiterate and backward tribes of Muslims inhabiting even the most isolated places of the world. In fact, kuffaar governments have attempted to eliminate the true Qur'aan from their illiterate Muslim subjects, but never were they able to succeed. The Huffaaz – the true Huffaaz and Ulama – were always present to wreck and thwart the conspiracies engineered by the inimical forces of the kuffaar.

The faculty of memory which was divinely bestowed to the Arabs, was so profound that they were able to memorize thousands of verses of poetry with relative ease. Thorough use was thus made of the faculty of memory in the preservation of the Qur'aan. This legacy inherited by the Ummah of Islam may be tested even today. Take away all the copies of the Qur'aan from any given group or community of Muslims. Within a short while the Qur'aan will surface in written form from the hearts and memories of the Huffaaz. This is no wishful thinking. It is an irrefutable and an indisputable fact which even the enemies of Islam concede. Gilchrist has no alternative, but to accept this reality. If this then is the case of memory after fourteen centuries of the Qur'aan history, then what precluded this phenomenon or this institution from exercising its effect during the very age of Wahi – during the very time of Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)? Even Gilchrist is constrained to admit:

“... the caliphate of Uthman when the text was finally standardized into the form in which it appears today.”

Mr Gilchrist, “today” is fourteen hundred years after the event of the “standardization”, but even according to you, today’s Qur’aan appears in that “standardized” form which was prepared fourteen centuries ago. Does this not ring any bell in your mind? The bell of truth! That what has been preserved intact for fourteen centuries by lesser beings could also have been preserved for a decade by greater beings – in fact could have been preserved intact to a greater degree of authenticity.

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It was through this divine agency of Hifz (memorizing the Qur'aan) that the Qur'aan Majeed reached the remotest corners of the world and was preserved intact in all parts of the world to the envy and chagrin of all the enemies of Islam. But, no matter how they may blow their pipes of envy and malice, the enemies of the Qur'aan will never achieve their heart's desire of seeing the distortion and effacement of the Qur'aanic text since Allah Ta'ala Himself declares:

“Verily, We have revealed the thikr (Qur'aan), and most assuredly, We are its Protectors.”

Elsewhere, in the Qur'aan, Allah Ta'ala declares:

“They (the enemies) desire to extinguish the Noor of Allah, but Allah will complete His Noor even though the kaafiroon detest it.”

COMMITTING THE QUR'AAN TO WRITING

Although the institution of Hifz was and is the best, most reliable and of decisive importance in the preservation of the Qur'aan, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) did not restrict the means of protecting the Qur'aan to only memory. Besides the committal of the Qur'aan to memory, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) instituted elaborate measures for having the Qur'aan recorded in writing during his very lifetime. Furthermore, writing the Qur'aan was not delayed until the whole of the Qur'aan Majeed was revealed. The Qur'aanic Wahi was recorded in writing immediately after the verses were revealed. The Qur'aan Majeed was recorded in writing on whatever writing materials were available at the time. In addition the writing took place under the direct supervision of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The Hadith evidences are very explicit on this fact, but Gilchrist will obviously choose to cast a blind eye to these evidences if in fact he does know thereof.

Hadhrat Zaid Bin Thaabit (Radiallahu anhu) was not the only Kaatib-e-Wahi (Scribe of the Wahi). Besides him, there were many other Sahaabah who acted as scribe and executed the

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obligation of recording the Qur'aan Majeed in the written form. The Khulafa-e-Raashideen, Ubay Bin Ka'b, Zubair Bin Awwaam, Muaawiyah, Mughirah Bin Shu'bah, Khalid Bin Waleed, Thaabit Bin Qais, Abaan Bin Saeed were among the more prominent scribes. Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) speaking on the committal of the Qur'aan to writing, said:

“It was the practice of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) after a part of the Qur'aan was revealed, to instruct the scribes of the precise position of the revealed portion, i.e. in which Surah it should be inserted and after which Aayat it should be placed.” (Fathul Baari)

On account of the dearth of paper at the time, the greater part of the Qur'aan was written on stone tablets, leather, date-palm branches, bamboo, leaves and bones. Thus, in the very lifetime of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) the whole Qur'aan Majeed was committed to writing under the direct supervision of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The Qur'aan not having been compiled in a conventional book form under Rasulullah's (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) supervision in no way detracts from the authenticity of the Qur'aan, nor from the fact that the whole Qur'aan was in fact committed to writing in his very lifetime. It had already been mentioned earlier that when the Sahaabah set about the task to write the Qur'aan in the form of a book, they found the whole Qur'aan which was written under the direct supervision of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). This written Qur'aan – written under Rasulullah's supervision – was found by many of the scribes. Only the last verse of Surah Taubah written under Rasulullah's (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) supervision was found with only Khuzaimah (Radiallahu anhu) although many other Sahaabah also had it in the written form and all knew it from memory.

Besides the Qur'aan having been reduced to the written form under Rasulullah's (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) supervision many other Sahaabah had written the Qur'aan from their own memories.

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The following statement made by Gilchrist should be weighed on the scale of the elaborate measures for preserving the Qur'aan in the very lifetime of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) – measures which have been explained thus far:

“Let it be said, in passing, that the sources relied on by Zaid – date palms, white stones, etc. – were hardly conducive to the compilation of a perfect text from which nothing was lacking. What evidence is there that he did, in fact, remarkably compose a perfect copy from such brittle resources?” (Page 6 of Gilchrist’s pamphlet)

What makes these obsolete writing materials “hardly conducive to the compilation of a perfect text?” These old materials, viz. Stone, bones, leather, etc, are more durable than paper. What is the evidence for claiming that Zaid’s resources were “brittle?” These claims by Gilchrist are his personal fancies for which he has failed to advance any proof. The explanation given by us illustrates amply that Zaid’s resources were not “brittle” nor scanty as Gilchrist wishes people to believe. On the contrary, the resources on which Zaid Bin Thaabit and the Sahaabah relied in the compilation of the Qur'aan were solid and beyond reproach. We shall briefly enumerate these resources:

1. Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), himself being the best Haafiz whose Hifz excluded the slightest possibility of error on account of Divine Protection. He was the Master.
2. The Qur'aan being written down during the very lifetime of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) under the direct supervision of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).
3. Numerous official scribes operated under the supervision of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) recording the Aayaat of the Qur'aan as they were being revealed.
4. Besides the written records prepared under the supervision of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), a number of Sahaabah had written down the Qur'aan from their own memories.
5. The wonderful and miraculous institution of Hifz which permeated the entire community of Sahaabah.

6. The chief compiler of the Qur'aan in written form, Zaid Bin Thaabit (Radiallahu anhu) was a perfect and a master Haafiz.
7. Numerous other Sahaabah were perfect Haafizes (Huffaaz).
8. Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) recited the whole of the Qur'aan each Ramadhaan to Jibraeel (alayhis salaam), the medium through whom the Qur'aan was revealed. During the year of Rasulullah's (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) demise he recited the Qur'aan Majeed twice to Jibraeel (alayhis salaam). At this session Zaid was present.
9. When Zaid (Radiallahu anhu) commenced the task of compiling the Qur'aan Majeed in book form, it (the Qur'aan) was no obscure and forgotten book. It was a Book which was being daily recited by thousands and thousands of Sahaabah and other Muslims. It was the common practice for ordinary people to complete one recitation in every ten days. Once in every three days was also a popular form of recital while reciting the whole Qur'aan once a day was also the practice with some Sahaabah.

These facts are sufficient to negate the baseless observation and claims of Gilchrist. It will be seen from these facts that Hadhrat Zaid (Radiallahu anhu) had a great and powerful treasury to work from. His resources, far from being brittle as contended by Gilchrist, were solid, fresh and most reliable. There was nothing left to chance. If the Qur'aan Majeed can be reproduced even today – fourteen centuries after the event – from the memories of the Huffaaz, then there is no logical reason why it could not have been achieved in the age which was in very close proximity to the age of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and by the very persons who acquired the Qur'aan from the Master. While in this belated century, the Huffaaz will only have memory to fall back onto, in that age – the age of the Sahaabah- Hadhrat Zaid (Radiallahu anhu) possessed many original writings and manuscripts and materials on which the Qur'aan was written in entirety under the direct supervision of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). In this age while we have no other way other than Huffaaz, in that age, Hadhrat Zaid (Radiallahu anhu) enjoyed the aid of all the official scribes who

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wrote the Qur'aan under Rasulullah's (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) direct command and supervision. In short, Hadhrat Zaid Bin Thaabit (Radiallahu anhu) possessed the strongest possible resources to compile a perfect and an exact replica of the Qur'aanic Revelation just as it was revealed and recited by Muhammadur Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

The compilations of the Qur'aan Majeed in book form was not a light task involving a single individual who presented his own version or who relied on his own memory or own record. Far from such an assumption, the Qur'aan Majeed being compiled in book form was the accomplishment of the whole Ummah of Sahaabah at the time, using the best and most authentic sources and the most solid resources. These facts are attested to by even unbiased non-Muslims who have made a study of the glorious Qur'aan's history.

GILCHRISTS BASELESS ASSUMPTION REGARDING ZAID

On page 6 of his pamphlet, Gilchrist presents the following hypothesis.

“Furthermore, the mushaf (written codex) that he finally compiled was, let it be noted, assembled not by the decree or direction of the Almighty but purely at his own personal discretion, no matter how careful he almost certainly was to arrange an authentic copy.”

The facts of the Qur'aan's compilation belie the claims of Gilchrist. Zaid (Radiallahu anhu) never compiled the Qur'aan at “his own personal discretion.” The elaborate and stringent measures adopted by him and the other Sahaabah in compiling the Qur'aan Majeed belie Gilchrist's claims. Hadhrat Zaid (Radiallahu anhu) being himself a perfect Haafiz could have written the Qur'aan Majeed from his memory if “personal discretion” featured anywhere in this gigantic task. Besides him, hundreds of Huffaaz were present to assist him. It was, therefore, quite possible to have established an organization or committee of Huffaaz for the purpose of writing the Qur'aan in

book form. Moreover, Hadhrat Zaid could merely have copied the Qur'aan from the various manuscripts and materials written during the lifetime of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Assuming that there were any missing parts in the written form as Gilchrist wishes us to believe, Zaid or any other Haafiz could have furnished it from memory. Thus, if “personal discretion” played any role in the compilation of the Qur'aan Majeed into book form, then the task of the compilation would not have seemed more “difficult than moving a mountain” to Zaid (Radiallahu anhu). The best and strongest resources were gathered and put into operation in this holy mission.

THE FIRST OFFICIAL COMPILATION IN BOOK FORM

Refuting the fact that the first compiled copy in book form was that under the instruction of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu anhu), Gilchrist alleges:

“The traditions would have us believe that the first official collection of the Qur'aan was therefore made by the caliph. Abu Bakr and yet we find that, instead of being copied and promulgated as the standard text of the Qur'aan, it was strangely preserved, if not concealed, in the private possession of the first two caliphs and..”

In support of his conclusion, Gilchrist cites the following statement of another kaafir.

“Thus, if the death of so many Moslems at al-Yamamah endangered the preservation of the text, why did Abu Bakr, after making his copy, practically conceal it, entrusting it to the guardianship of a woman?”

(Caetani: Uthman and the Recension of Koran)

What evidence can Gilchrist or anyone else tender to negate the claims that the copy compiled under the instruction of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu anhu) was in fact not the first official collection of the Qur'aan Majeed into book form? Gilchrist has designated his pamphlet, “Evidences for the collection of the Qur'aan,” but he fails to produce any evidence for the implied

rejection contained in the aforementioned statement made by him. Prior to the collection ordered by Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu anhu) there was no other officially compiled Qur'aan copy in book form. This is a historical fact which requires no further amplification.

The question is asked: Why did Abu Bakr “conceal” the first officially compiled copy “if the death of so many Moslems at al-Yamamah endangered the preservation of the text?” There is a world of difference between guarding and concealing. Holding custody of the first compiled copy of the Qur'aan Majeed cannot be interpreted as “concealing”. The kuffaar seek to introduce some sinister motive for Abu Bakr’s custody of the Qur'aan by describing it as “concealing”. The actual purpose in compiling the Qur'aan Majeed in book form is clearly stated in the narrations from which the enemies are quoting. The purpose underlying the first compilation is stated very clearly as follows:

“Umar informs me that a large group of Huffaaz has been slain in the Battle of Yamaamah and that if the Huffaaz have to be martyred at this rate, he feared that a considerable part of the Qur'aan Majeed will be lost.”

It is clear that the underlying purpose was to guard against any possible future loss of passages of the Qur'aan should such calamities befall the Ummah where large groups of Huffaz are killed. It is significant that Hadhrat Umar coupled the preservation and authenticity of the Qur'aan Majeed with the institution of Huffaaz. The official copy compiled in book form was for future use, not for use during the time when it was compiled since there had not yet arisen any such need. The single calamity of loss of Huffaaz at Yamaamah did not endanger the preservation of the Qur'aan Majeed during that age because numerous Huffaaz and senior Sahaabah were still living. The compilation of the official copy was for future preservation, hence Hadhrat Umar (Radiallahu anhu) expressed the fear of a possible loss of part of the Qur'aan in the future should the incidence of the Huffaaz being martyred be on the increase. This first official collection in book form was put to use later during the Khilaafat of Hadhrat Uthmaan (radhiyallahu

anhu) when it was used to compile the standardized text in circulation today.

There was no need during the Khilaafat of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu anhu) to standardize and promulgate this collection as the only official text since such a need arose only during the time of Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiyallahu anhu). Different circumstances led to the compilation of the copy by Abu Bakr (Radiyallahu anhu) and Uthmaan (Radiyallahu anhu). The factor which constrained Uthmaan's (Radiyallahu anhu) compilation to be promulgated as the only standard text did not exist during the time of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radiyallahu anhu). It was explained earlier that the situation which gave rise to the action instituted by Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiyallahu anhu) was the differences, disputes and arguments which prevailed on account of ignorance among various communities who were not aware of the different authentic forms of Qira'at of the Qur'aan Majeed. On the other hand, the factor which caused the Qur'aan Majeed to be compiled by Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radiyallahu anhu) was the fear that in future a considerable portion of the Qur'aan may be lost as a result of the Huffaaz being martyred at the rate which took place in Yamaamah.

THE COMPILATION BY HADHRAT UTHMAAN

Gilchrist states:

“This tradition informs us quite clearly that other manuscripts of the Qur'aan some in sections, others complete, had been written out and that they were in use elsewhere in the conquered territories. Uthman's order that they should be burnt indicates that there were serious textual differences between them and the manuscript in Hafsa's possession.”

“It is practically certain that none of the other texts was identical to that compiled by Zaid for Abu Bakr, as not one was allowed to be spared destruction. Uthman's drastic action implies that the differences between these texts were serious textual variants and that they

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affected not just the manner of the recitation of the Qur'aan but its actual form and content.” ‘

It was never the contention of Muslims that prior to the compilation by Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) there were no manuscripts or copies of the Qur'aan Majeed in circulation. In fact, this fact has been stated earlier and the Hadith is very clear in this regard. In making this statement, Gilchrist has served no purpose other than redundancy. But, his contention that Uthmaan's order that they be burnt indicates serious textual differences with the revealed Qur'aan is utterly baseless. Gilchrist draws this baseless conclusion from Hadhrat Uthmaan's command to eliminate all other copies of the Qur'aan Majeed which were compiled unofficially. Gilchrist himself is fully aware that he has no proof to substantiate his claim hence he admits that his conclusion is arrived at by "indication" and "implication". He implies this to be the case since he has understood the motive underlying Hadhrat Uthmaan's order as such. Gilchrist, names his booklet, "EVIDENCES for the collection of the Qur'aan." He sets out to refute the authenticity of the Qur'aan Majeed by supposedly producing evidence and proof, but all refutations tendered by him are the products of his wishful thinking and based on implication and baseless hypotheses. Basing one's case on implication is not evidence.

Furthermore, it is conceded that there prevailed differences in recitation. One such difference pertains to textual variation. But, such textual variation as explained earlier represented no addition or alteration of the Qur'aan. Such differences, be they recital or textual, were revealed forms of the Qur'aan Majeed. Since the various forms of revealed Qira'at presented no cause for alarm during the Khilaafat of Hadhrat Abu Bakr and Umar (Radiallahu anhuma), there was no need to institute the action taken by Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) during his Khilaafat. Gilchrist endeavours to portray the differences in recital and text as man-made interpolations. But, this is not the case. There is not the slightest evidence to support the conclusion made by Gilchrist and others on the basis of

implication, inference and assumption. The authorized and revealed differences of Qur'aanic recital have already been explained earlier.

Hadhrat Uthmaan's measure of eliminating all other authorized and true versions of the Qur'aan Majeed was necessitated by the disputes which arose in the conquered territories– disputes among new Muslims ignorant of the other forms of authorized Qira'at. Since a particular Ustaad imparted only a specific Qira'at, they remained unaware of the other authorized versions. This led to future disputes when another version of recitation was heard. By “authorized version” here is meant the forms of Qira'at which were divinely revealed and which Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) imparted to the Sahaabah.

Gilchrist would have been correct in his assumption of “serious” textual differences if the variant readings were interpolated by man. But, the term “serious” cannot be applied to the various forms of Qira'at since all forms of Qira'at imparted by Sahaabah were divinely revealed and not introduced by man. The only motive for Uthmaan's action was to ensure uniformity in Qira'at to eliminate disputation and falling into error as a result of baseless disputation.

Should any of the other authorized versions be extant it will not detract from either its authenticity nor the authenticity of the version standardized by Hadhrat Uthmaan (radhiyallahu anhu) since all authorized versions are the product of divine revelation. If Gilchrist wishes anyone to accept his contention, he should produce evidence to prove that the other manuscripts with “textual differences” were not in fact divine revelations. And, in the production of such evidence he must furnish proof from Hadith narrations since he has set himself the task of proving that the Qur'aan is not authentic from Hadith narration.

It was never contended that the other texts which were ordered to be burnt were identical to the one compiled during the Khilaafat of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radiyallahu anhu), hence Gilchrist has submitted a superfluous claim. But, what proof

has Gilchrist to disprove the claim that there may have been among the eliminated texts, copies identical with the one compiled during the Khilaafat of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu anhu)? There is absolutely no ground for assuming that Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) or the Committee appointed by him meticulously scrutinized each and every copy which was ordered to be eliminated. The gathering and elimination of all other copies besides the standardized text was merely to ensure uniformity. This purpose was achieved by simply issuing a blanket order to eliminate all other copies. Such a blanket order was necessitated by the absence of a measure to scrutinize each and every copy individually. Scrutinizing each and every copy would have proven too laborious and difficult a task. The simplest and safest way to ensure the prevalence of the standardized copy was to eliminate all other copies.

It is also preposterous to arbitrarily assume that there was not a single other version or copy which agreed with the copy compiled under instructions of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu anhu). What is the proof for the assertion that there was no other copy of the Qur'aan Majeed which agreed with the copy compiled by Hadhrat Zaid (Radiallahu anhu)? There is absolutely no evidence to support Gilchrist's claim. On the contrary all indications lead to the conclusion that there were other such copies. It is an established fact that despite the existence of several authorized and divine Qira'ats (forms of recital), the Qur'aan Shareef compiled into book form by Hadhrat Zaid (Radiallahu anhu) was not the unknown version of any single person. The history of the compilation of the first official copy confirms that whatever Surahs and Aayaat it contained were obtained from all the scribes of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and from many other Sahaabah. The copy compiled under the instructions of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu anhu) was merely the written representation of what all the Sahaabah recited daily. Gilchrist's claim has therefore to be dismissed for the fallacy that it is.

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On the basis of the fallacy expounded by Gilchrist above, he forms the following conclusion:

“Therefore the Qur'aan text that has been handed down through the centuries is not that to which the companions of Muhammad gave their unqualified assent but purely one form of it, uncorroborated in every point by the others in circulation, which was finally established as the standard text to the exclusion of the others.”

The claim that the Sahaabah of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) did not give “their unqualified support” for the copy of the Qur'aan Shareef compiled into book form by Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radhiallahu anhu) is utterly baseless. Such a sweeping claim requires proof. But, Gilchrist has not managed to tender even one narration to substantiate his claim that the Sahaabah did not unite in acceptance of the compilation by Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu anhu). A mere claim by an enemy of Islam attacking the authenticity of the Holy Book of Islam without furnishing any proof whatever is only wishful thinking and the hope that people will swallow as the truth the claim put forward. As mentioned earlier, the first official compilation of the Qur'aan was the product of the efforts and co-operation of all the Sahaabah who came forward with whatever they had of the Qur'aan in the written form. The stamp of approval of the official scribes of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the other senior Sahaabah is sufficient to demonstrate the “unqualified support” which the Sahaabah offered for the compilation by Hadhrat Zaid (Radiallahu anhu).

Gilchrist avers that the “text handed down through the centuries is purely one form of it.” Assuming this to be the case, it does not follow therefrom that the present Qur'aan is not authentic. If it is ‘one form of it’ as asserted by Gilchrist, then too, it is an authentic form thereof, since it is the claim of Islam that the Qur'aan was revealed in SEVEN forms. It now devolves on Gilchrist to prove that this “purely one form of it” is not among the seven revealed forms. But, never will Gilchrist or anyone else be able to furnish any proof for any such baseless

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claim. If they wish, let them answer the challenge of Allah Ta'ala. The Qur'aan is and will forever be protected by Allah Ta'ala. If the “standardized” version compiled under the instruction of Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) withstood the onslaught of 14 centuries and retained its authenticity – a fact conceded by even the enemies – then Gilchrist does not stand even the hope of success in his diabolical mission to disprove the authenticity of the Qur'aan Majeed.

The claim that the copies compiled by Hadhrat Uthman (Radiallahu anhu) were “uncorroborated in every point by others in circulation”, in no way whatever detracts from the authenticity of the Qur'aan-e-Hakeem. It was never the claim of Islam that every Qira'at of the Qur'aan Majeed corroborated each and every other Qira'at “in every point”. The claim of Muslims has always been that the Qur'aan Majeed was revealed in seven forms. Since the Divine Revelation was in seven forms, it is only logical that “corroboration in every point” could never have been our claim. But differences in the forms of recital do not support the claim made by Gilchrist since all such differences in Qira'at were revealed forms taught by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), which came under the purview of Sab'ah Ahruf (The Seven Forms). It is left to the enemies of the Qur'aan to prove that these official and authentic differences were not among the revealed forms of recital.

Citing his master Jeffrey, *The Qur'aan as Scripture*, Gilchrist quotes:

“Attempts have been made to avoid this conclusion by claiming that all Uthman did was to remove dialectal peculiarities that had crept into the pronunciation of the Qur'aan as it was recited, and have a standardized type of text written out in the pure dialect of the Quraish. This matter of Quraish dialect is indeed mentioned in the traditions referring to this Recension, but to pretend that it was merely a matter of dialectal variation is to run counter to the whole purport of the accounts the vast majority of dialectal variations would not have been represented in the written form at all, and so would not have necessitated a new text.”

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The “conclusion” mentioned in the abovementioned passage existed merely in Jeffrey’s imagination, but is believed as fact by Gilchrist. Since there was no such “conclusion” stated above, there were no attempts to “avoid” anything which supposedly casted aspersions on the integrity and authenticity of the Qur’aan. The “conclusion” has been drawn by Jeffrey on the basis of what he has interpreted, but the Hadith narrations do not provide any scope for the wild and unsubstantiated conclusions of fallacy tendered by Jeffrey and adopted by Gilchrist.

In the above-cited passage the following claim is attributed to Muslims: “.. by claiming that all Uthman did was to remove dialectal peculiarities that had crept into the pronunciation of the Qur’aan”. No such claim was ever made by any Muslim authority of the Shariah. It was never claimed nor ever conceded by Muslims that differences in recital “had crept into the Qur’aan”. There is no Hadith narration which asserts what Jeffrey has claimed. Whatever narrations which Gilchrist has produced from the books of Islam merely state the existence of various official, accredited and divinely revealed forms of Qira’at. It is indeed a fallacy to interpret the various accredited forms of recital as “peculiarities which had crept into” the Qur’aan.

The assertion that the “vast majority of dialectal variations would not have been represented in the Uthmaani written form”, is baseless. Jeffrey and Gilchrist, in their ardour to disprove the authenticity of the Qur’aan Majeed, generally present a theory full of flaws. In regard to the Rasmul Khat (the mode of writing) adopted in the copies compiled under the instruction of Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu), it was never claimed that it encompassed all forms of Qira’at. In contrast to Jeffrey’s claim, Islam claims that the majority of Qira’ats were included in the Rasmul Khat of the copy compiled by the orders of Hadhrat Uthmaan. It is baseless for anyone to claim that the Rasmul Khat of the Uthmaani copy could not have represented the vast majority of accredited Qira’ats. There is no proof for this conclusion made by the enemies of the Qur’aan Majeed.

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The narrations are quite clear that the majority of the Qira'ats were represented in the Rasmul Khat adopted by Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu). Those forms of recital which could not be incorporated into this Rasmul Khat were preserved in separate compilations. A separate compilation for each form of recitation not contained by the official and standard Rasmul Khat was ordered by Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu). There is, therefore, no substance in Jeffrey's claim attributed falsely to Muslims.

That the endeavour of Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) was simply to compile the Qur'aan in the pure Quraishi dialect in which it was revealed, is an undeniable fact. Although Jeffrey attempts to dismiss this fact, he reluctantly concedes: "This matter of Quraish dialect is indeed mentioned in the traditions..." The Ahadith are explicit on this fact – so explicit that even Jeffrey had no option other than concede this fact. Thus, what Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) did, was only to compile the original Qur'aan in the manner in which it was revealed, without adding or deleting anything therefrom. There was never any incumbency to adopt all forms of Qira'at. One Rasmul Khat was adopted, incorporating several forms of recitation – all with the same meaning – as the standard form for the Ummah to ensure the elimination of disputes which ignorance of the various accredited and authorized forms is bound to create among those not versed with the different Qira'ats. To claim, therefore, that the adoption of a specific authorized form of writing and recital entails deletion or interpolation is unreasonable and unbacked by any narrational and rational proofs. It behoves Gilchrist to come up with Hadith proof to substantiate his fallacious claims.

Gilchrist cites the following claim made by Jeffrey:

"Rather, his (i.e Hadhrat Uthmaan) aim was to select from amid a welter of rival texts, each claiming to be the uniquely authentic record of what had been revealed to Muhammad, a single text to be officially promulgated as the *textus receptus* of the Muslims."

Again, this claim is false. Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) did not select a copy from “amid a welter of rival Qur'aan texts”. Nor did Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) select any of the supposedly “welter of rival texts” to promulgate it as the standard text. The narrations explain the system adopted by Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) to compile the standard copy. The manuscripts compiled by Hadhrat Zaid (Radiallahu anhu) were at this time in the custody of Hadhrat Hafsa (Radiallahu anhu). It should be noted that the compilation of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (radiallahu anhu) comprised of a number of manuscripts. Each Surah was written in a separate manuscript. These very manuscripts were used for the compilation of the standard copy ordered by Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu). There was no “welter of rival Qur'aan texts” from which Hadhrat Zaid or Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhuma) did any selection. The only text employed by Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) was the one official and carefully preserved text prepared during the Khilaafat of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu anhu). The facts of this compilation refute the claim of Jeffrey as utterly false. The manuscripts written during the time of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu anhu) were not arranged in the Surah order as was revealed, but were all separate manuscripts. The systematic arrangement of the Surah as instructed by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) was accomplished in the copy prepared under Hadhrat Uthmaan's instruction.

Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) had appointed a committee of four senior Sahaabah to prepare the standard copy from the manuscripts which were written during the time and by the order of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu anhu). In preparing the standard copy, the manuscripts of Abu Bakr (Radiallahu anhu) were mainly used. However, for greater caution the same efficient process adopted in the time of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu anhu), was again made use of. In the preparation of this copy, again it was verified by comparing it with the original writings of the scribes who operated under the command of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

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Everything contained in the standard copy of Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) was in agreement with the writings of the scribes. Everything which the manuscripts of Abu Bakr contained is contained in the standard copy. But, to verify its authenticity, it was compared with the original writings of the scribes – what they had written under the direct instruction and supervision of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

A certain verse of Surah Ahzab was found in the original writings of only Hadhrat Khuzaimah (Radiallahu anhu). Referring to this incident, Gilchrist says:

“Furthermore the Hadith go on to inform us that even after this recension by the four scribes, Zaid recalled a verse which was lost:

Zaid bin Thabit added, ‘A Verse from Surat Ahzab was missed by me when we copied the Qur’aan and I used to hear Allah’s Apostle reciting it. So we searched for it and found it with Khuzaima bin Thabit al-Ansar.”

(Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 6, p 479)

Gilchrist has understood from this Hadith that the verse in question was totally lost; that no one knew about it; that no one had any written record of it. But, this is not the case. The explanation has already been given regarding a similar incident on the occasion of the compilation during the Khilaafat of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu anhu). We shall briefly repeat the explanation. The manuscripts of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu anhu) contained this particular verse of Surah Ahzab. It will be recalled that the verses searched for and found only with Hadhrat Khuzaimah (Radiallahu anhu) during the time of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu anhu) were not verses from Surah Ahzab. Those verses belonged to Surah Taubah. The supposedly “lost” verse on this occasion, i.e. during the compilation of the Uthmaani copy, was a verse from another Surah, viz, Surah Ahzab. In the compilation of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu anhu) this verse of Surah Ahzab existed, hence Zaid (Radiallahu anhu) did not report it “missing” on that occasion. This fact by itself proves that the manuscripts of

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Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu anhu) contained this Aayat. Zaid himself was fully aware of the existence of this Aayat, hence he said:

“... which I used to hear Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) reciting...”

The numerous other Huffaaz also knew of this verse. The claim that the verse was “lost” is, therefore, utterly baseless. If the verse was “lost” as averred by Gilchrist, then Zaid’s search for it was meaningless. He can only search for something which he knew about. The Hadith does not say that the verse was lost – lost in the way Gilchrist interprets. The Hadith merely reports that Hadhrat Zaid “missed” the Aayat which he was aware of. This is stated categorically in the Hadith which even Gilchrist has cited in part.

As explained earlier, the entire Qur’aan was written down during the very time of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) under his direct supervision by a number of scribes. The manuscripts compiled by Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu anhu) and the single-volume copy arranged by the order of Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) were compared for authenticity with the writings in the possession of the various scribes who had recorded the Qur’aan under Rasulullah’s (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) supervision. It was in these writings that Hadhrat Zaid (Radiallahu anhu) did not find the verse of Surah Ahzaab. None of the scribes living at the time had a written record available – a record written under Rasulullah’s supervision – of the Aayat in question. Such a written record was found only with Hadhrat Khuzaimah (Radiallahu anhu). The verse in question at no stage was a missing entity among the Sahaabah. There is not the slightest shred of evidence to substantiate such a claim.

Furthermore, the fact that Hadhrat Zaid (Radiallahu anhu) categorically stated hearing the verse being recited by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the fact that Hadhrat Khuzaimah (Radiallahu anhu) had a written record of

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the Aayat corroborated by Zaid's memory belie Gilchrist's claim of the Aayat being "lost".

Stating another baseless claim, Gilchrist writes:

"It is to be presumed that, as Zaid was the sole compiler of Hafsah's text, there were Medinese dialectical variants in his work which needed to be corrected by the other three."

Firstly, the arbitrary claim that "Zaid was the sole compiler of Hafsah's text" is false. This conclusion of Gilchrist is indeed very peculiar. He cites Ahadith pertaining to the history of the Qur'aan's compilation, but he forms the conclusion that Zaid (Radiallahu anhu) was the "sole compiler". What is his proof for his claim? He wishes us to believe that his pamphlet contains "evidence", but he fails to provide any proof! According to the authentic Ahadith, along with Hadhrat Zaid (Radiallahu anhu), Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu anhu) had appointed Hadhrat Umar, also a Haafiz, to compile the Qur'aan manuscripts which finally were held in the custody of Hadhrat Hafsah (Radiallahu anha). The narrations inform us that both Hadhrat Zaid (Radiallahu anhu) and Hadhrat Umar (Radiallahu anhu) would jointly verify and accept the written verses which were presented to them. The evidence of the Ahadith thus refutes Gilchrist's claim.

On the basis of his baseless claim, Gilchrist tenders a presumption. He thus says:

"It has to be presumed that,.."

A presumption reared on a false premiss (i.e. the claim that Hadhrat Zaid – Radiallahu anhu – was the sole compiler) is construed as "evidence" by Gilchrist. What respect can anyone have for conclusions, the strength of which is presumption based on a false premiss?

Zaid's co-worker in the compilation of the manuscripts of the Qur'aan Majeed was Umar (Radiallahu anhu) who was not a Medinite. Gilchrist has assumed that since Hadhrat Zaid (Radiallahu anhu) "was a Madinite", the manuscripts prepared

during the Khilaafat of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu anhu) contained “Medinese dialectal variants which needed to be corrected”. This implies that the compilation by Hadhrat Zaid (Radiallahu anhu) contained errors which the Quraishi Sahaabah appointed by Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) during his Khilaafat had to rectify. But, the Hadith narrations do not support this contention or conclusion. The manuscripts compiled during the Khilaafat of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu anhu) were, in the final analysis, after the verses had been thoroughly verified, the joint work of Hadhrat Zaid and Hadhrat Umar (Radiallahu anhu). Hadhrat Umar (Radiallahu anhu) was not a Medinite, hence the possibility of errors due to any Madni dialect was precluded.

Gilchrist further bases his assumption of errors needing correction as a result of “Medinese dialectal variants” in the work of Zaid, on the following narration:

“Uthman said to the three Quraishi men, ‘In case you disagree with Zaid bin Thabit on any point in the Qur’aan, then write it in the dialect of the Quraish as the Qur’aan was revealed in their tongue.’”

(Cited by Gilchrist from Bukhaari).

The disagreement or possible disagreement referred to by Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) pertains to Qira’at – accredited form of recital – not to any errors which required correction as Gilchrist claims. It has already been explained that there existed a number of Qira’ats which were divinely sanctioned. However, it does not follow that everyone was aware of all forms for recital. In the event of Hadhrat Zaid reciting a particular word or verse according to a Qira’at form which differed with the form of the three Quraishi Sahaabah of the committee, then the Quraishi form had to be adopted since the first revelation of the Qur’aan was in the language or dialect of the Quraish. Later, permission was granted by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) to the Sahaabah to recite in accordance with other dialects as well. There is, therefore, no question of correcting any errors as suggested by Gilchrist. The aim was to prepare a standard compilation, hence the other

forms and dialects which could not be accommodated by the Uthmaani Rasmul Khat were not included in the copy compiled by the order of Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu). An illustration of the type of disagreement mentioned in this narration is the reciting of the word, "TABOOT". While Hadhrat Zaid (Radiallahu anhu) recited it, TABOOH, the Quraishi dialect had it as TABOOT. Both terms mean exactly the same thing and both forms were accredited and sanctioned by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). However, since the aim of the committee appointed by Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) was to prepare a standard copy, only one form could be incorporated by the Rasmul Khat adopted. The next question which arises is that which of these two forms – Taboot or TabooH – was to be adopted? Since the first Revelation was in the Quraishi dialect, Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) ordered its adoption. This procedure cannot be regarded as a process of correcting any errors which Gilchrist wishes readers to believe. Thus, the different forms of recital were not errors or additions which "crept" into the text as claimed by Gilchrist. All forms of Qira'at were authorized and sanctioned by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

Referring to the compilation ordered by Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu), Gilchrist says:

"Accordingly even this copy can hardly be regarded as a perfect collection of the Qur'aan to the last word or letter, nothing added or missing from it."

Gilchrist has not furnished any evidence for this conclusion. He could come up with only narrations which refer to different forms of authorized Qira'at. Nowhere in his pamphlet does Gilchrist provide even a single narration which substantiates his claim of addition or deletion. He draws his own wishful conclusions from the narrations which speak of the forms of recital in vogue among the Sahaabah. The Rasmul Khat of the standardized copy excluding certain forms of Qira'at cannot be said to have deleted any part of the Qur'aan Majeed since it contained everything which was revealed in that form, viz. in the Quraishi dialect. Similarly, any other form of authorized –

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authorized by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) – form of recital which differs with the Rasmul Khat of the Uthmaani compilation cannot be described as being different from the revealed Qur'aan, since the Qur'aan was revealed in SEVEN FORMS according to the authentic Ahadith.

A recitation which is not sanctioned by Islam can undoubtedly be branded as a version which is not a proper collection of the Qur'aan. But Gilchrist has been unable to produce any evidence to indicate the existence of any unauthorized Qira'at among the “variant readings”, which in fact were all authorized forms.

Whatever narrations of Hadith have been cited by Gilchrist and his master Jeffrey, pertain to differences in accredited forms of recitation. Gilchrist attempts to manipulate these differences to put across the charge that the Qur'aan is not the Qur'aan in entirety as handed to the Sahaabah by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). However, the explanation given so far regarding the forms of recitation should be sufficient to refute the contention made by Gilchrist.

Having failed miserably in finding any fault in the present Qur'aan which Gilchrist concedes to be the copy standardized during the Khilaafat of Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu), he attempts to detract from the Qur'aan's originality and authenticity by reference to the different forms of Qira'at prevalent during the time of the Sahaabah. He thus says:

“... the argument for the textual perfection of the Qur'aan cannot be taken back from the time of Uthman to Muhammad himself.”

If the textual perfection of the Qur'aan Majeed can be successfully taken back from the present day to Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) over a period of 14 centuries, then there is absolutely nothing to prevent textual perfection being taken back from Uthmaan to Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) – a period of a mere 14 years. The history of the Qur'aan's compilation proves beyond all shadow of doubt that the Rasmul Khat adopted in the copy standardized by Hadhrat Uthmaan

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(Radiallahu anhu) linked up with Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The elaborate measures which both Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu anhu) and Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) had adopted in compiling the Qur'aan illustrate the high degree of accuracy and certainty with which the Qur'aan copies were taken back from the time of Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) to Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

The measures adopted by the Committee of Sahaabah appointed for this purpose, were designed to precisely achieve this degree of authenticity, i.e. linking each and every word of the Qur'aan directly to Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). This was the prime function of the Committee which compiled the copies, both in Abu Bakr's and Uthmaan's times. It is because of having achieved total and absolute certainty and authenticity in this respect that the Rasmul Khat of the standardized copy met with the unanimous approval of the Sahaabah and was sanctioned as the Qur'aan which was revealed to Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and which he conveyed to the Sahaabah.

The Rasmul Khat adopted by Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) has been indisputably proven as authentic by an unbroken Chain (Sanad) of authoritative narration linking up with Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). This fact cannot be impeached on the basis of narrational evidence. This irrefutable fact can be quite simply ascertained by reference to and study of the authentic Ahadith literature. For the purpose of this dilation, the Hadith literature should be considered sufficient testimony since Gilchrist has raised his edifice of criticism on the foundation of Hadith literature. Justifying his stand based on Hadith narrations, Gilchrist says:

“... it must be said that there is no alternative chain of evidence anywhere in the history of Islam to tell us how the Qur'aan came to be written in the form in which we now have it. There is no other source to consult.”

Gilchrist thus concedes that the only source to consult in regard to the preservation and compilation of the Qur'aan Majeed is only the Hadith literature. Since he bases his

exposition of the subject on Hadith literature it logically follows by implication that he should accept the Ahadith which categorically assert the authenticity and divinity of the Qur'aanic Revelations. An impartial study of a subject does not admit acceptance of only facts which seem supportive of one's private views and opinions. Since Gilchrist has chosen the "evidences" for his case from the Hadith literature of Islam, he has no logical grounds for discarding those Ahadith which impugn his theories, views and beliefs. Either present an impartial and factual account of the subject under study or merely state the beliefs and theories which you may feel entitled to hold on the grounds of blind faith. Confusing the issues stems from oblique reasoning which is the result of prejudice.

Further referring to the Hadith literature in justification of his procedure of criticism leveled against the Qur'aan Majeed, Gilchrist avers:

"The records in the Hadith, on the other hand, are an historical heritage, indeed the historical heritage, in Islam, informing us how the Qur'aan was reduced to its present form. One cannot prefer bold, wishful claims in favour of the Qur'aan's supposed perfection unsupported by any facts or evidences, against a factual and historical record widely reported in different works to the contrary. Such evidences cannot be dismissed in favour of pure speculation."

Gilchrist should be the first to follow this advice he seeks to give to Muslims. In fact, he is guilty of dismissing the evidences of the Hadith literature in favour of pure speculation. It is on the base of "pure speculation" that he chose narrations at random, all pertaining to the official, accredited and authorized forms of Qira'at, distorted their meanings, misinterpreted the statements and drew his own conclusion to bolster his baseless theories. Then the Hadith being a historical heritage in Islam is an undoubted and an accepted fact. Since Gilchrist ostensibly concedes this fact, it behoves him to accept Ahadith which uphold the authenticity of the Qur'aan and the Ahadith which

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assert categorically the unbroken relationship of the Qur'aanic Revelations to Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) – from Uthmaan to Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Gilchrist and all enemies of the Qur'aan fail miserably in the production of a single narration impinging this absolute fact. Whatever Gilchrist furnishes from the Ahadith by way of “evidence” for his claims pertains to only the “variant readings” - which all were in fact authorized by Allah Ta'ala. None of the narrations supplied by Gilchrist refers even remotely to any unauthorized material which has supposedly crept into the Qur'aan according to the theories of the enemies of Allah. The Qur'aan's perfection is not “supposed” as Gilchrist alleges. It is proven on the basis of the authentic Ahadith about which Gilchrist is constrained to confess:

“Such evidences (i.e. Hadith narrations) cannot be dismissed in favour of pure speculation.”

“... a factual and historical record widely reported in different works...”

There is no other source (other than Hadith) to consult.”

N.B. Words in brackets are ours.

If Gilchrist is genuine in his assertion that the Hadith narrations “cannot be dismissed in favour of speculation”, then it devolves on him to abstain from speculation and accept the Ahadith which uphold the authenticity of the Uthmaani compilation and take it back to Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The Ahadith explicitly assert that the Qur'aan in the form we have it today – the Qur'aan in the form adopted by Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) – was the Qur'aan which was revealed from Loohul Mahfooz; the Qur'aan which Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) recited during his last year on earth twice in the presence of Jibrael (alayhis salaam). At this occasion Hadhrat Zaid Bin Thaabit (radiallahu anhu) was present, hence he was the natural choice to head the commissions appointed to compile the Qur'aan Majeed, during the time of Hadhrat Abu Bak (radiallahu anhu) and the time of

Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu). The Ahadith claim that the Sahaabah accepted the accomplishment of Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) with unanimous approval. The history of the Uthmaani compilation and the passing of fourteen centuries bear testimony to the momentous accomplishment of authenticity of Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu). If the Uthmaani compilation had not enjoyed the sanction and the approval of the Sahaabah and the Ummah as a whole, it would never have withstood the onslaught and the ravages of fourteen centuries. That the Sahaabah offered their unanimous approval for the momentous accomplishment effected by the order of Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu), is an undisputed fact. In a flabby attempt to show a crack in this Ijma' (unanimity) of the Sahaabah, Gilchrist cites the solitary exception of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Masud's disagreement and his initial refusal to hand over his privately prepared compilation. But, the facts of the case elaborately explained in the Ahadith do not support Gilchrist's stand in the least bit.

Hadhrat Ibn Masud's initial refusal to hand over his compilation to the messengers of Hadhrat Uthmaan (radiallahu anhu) does not detract from the authenticity of the Uthmaani compilation. His refusal cannot be interpreted to mean that the compilation of Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) was not authentic. On what grounds does Gilchrist conclude that Ibn Masud's (Radiallahu anhu) refusal to hand over his compilation implied that the standardized compilation was unauthentic? This conclusion is nothing other than one of Gilchrist's unsubstantiated presumptions based on his own wishful thinking – based on pure speculation while dismissing all evidence to the contrary. In spite of Hadhrat Ibn Masud's initial refusal, he at no time impugned the authenticity of the compilation ordered by Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu). His refusal is quite understandable. Hadhrat Ibn Masud (Radiallahu anhu) had written his copy during the age of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). His copy contained notes and explanations as well. His copy was for his personal use, not for the use of the Ummah at large. In so far as he was

concerned, this copy was his personal treasure and he understandably attached the greatest sentimental value to his compilation. When the sudden order to dispense with his compilation came, it was not a simple matter to resolve. Furthermore, he was a senior Sahaabi and was fully entitled to hold a difference in opinion with Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu). It is common knowledge – substantiated by the Ahadith – that even Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu anhu) and Hadhrat Zaid Ibn Thaabit (Radiallahu anhu) were initially not favourably disposed to compiling the Qur'aan Majeed in biik form. But, the reasoning and pleas of Hadhrat Umar (Radiallahu anhu) finally convinced them of the wisdom and need to accomplish this momentous task. Similarly, Hadhrat Ibn Masu'd (Radiallahu anhu) did not perceive the need for a standard compilation nor the need to dispense with other forms of Qira'at whereas Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) and all other Sahaabah considered this step a vital need. Thus, the disagreement – the initial disagreement – between Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ud (Radiallahu anhu) and Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) was not in regard to Qur'aanic Aayat nor to authenticity, but was in regard to two points: (1) The order to Ibn Mas'ud (Radiallahu anhu) to hand over his cherished copy. (2) The preparation of a standard copy which will bring to an end several other Qira'ats in vogue.

The initial dispute never pertained to any allegation that the standardized copy was not authentic or that it had deleted anything from the Qur'aanic revelations or that it had interpolated anything. In fact, Hadhrat Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (Radiallahu anhu), inspite of his initial displeasure, handed over his compilation to Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) and accepted the standardized copy for the benefit of the Ummah.

The differences between the recitals of Ibn Mas'ud (Radiallahu anhu) and that contained in the Rasmul Khat of Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) pertained to Qira'at, both being correct and authentic, sanctioned by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Hence, it cannot be attributed to either Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ud (Radiallahu anhu) or to any other Sahaabi that any of them criticized or impeached the

authenticity of the standardized copy. The narrations which Gilchrist lists in his booklet speak only of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Masud's (Radiallahu anhu) displeasure at the order to hand over his compilation.

Another point of vital importance to remember is that each and every narration passed off as "Hadith" is not in fact Saheeh (authentic) Hadith. There are various classes of Ahadith. Just any fabrication cannot be passed off as a statement of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) or of a Sahaabi. The authorities of Hadith have thoroughly sifted and classified the narrations. Hence, while the enemies of Islam can and will seize on any fabrication to support their theories, the followers of Islam will not be duped by such manipulation. The authenticity of a narration depends on the Chain of its narrators. The Aimmah of Hadith have formulated stringent tests to ascertain the validity and authenticity of a narration. A narration cannot be accepted as a statement of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) merely because some historian has included it in his writings. One who desires to raise his case on the foundations of Hadith literature must of a necessity refer to the authorities (Aimmah) of Hadith for guidance in this respect. But, this is too much to expect from Gilchrist. His fanciful theories will locate no avenue for passage in the authentic Ahadith.

Besides what has been explained in regard to the initial difference of opinion held by Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ud (Radiallahu anhu), it is necessary to make mention of the fact that fabricated narrations have been attributed to Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ud (Radiallahu anhu). Many stories circulated about his compilation are utterly baseless, fabricated and false. He, being among the senior bearers of the Qur'aan was fully qualified in the subject of Qur'aanic Revelations. He never disputed the authenticity of the Uthmaani compilation and any differences between his copy and that of the standard copy of Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) related to only Qira'at – authorized differences, sanctioned by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), himself. Let Gilchrist refer to the Hadith literature

and let him not dismiss “such evidence in favour of pure speculation.”

The following statement of Gilchrist is indicative of the type of “pure speculation” employed by him in his abortive bid to assail the integrity and authenticity of the Qur'aan-e-Kareem:

“Another tradition from the same source says that when Abu Zabyan, an early convert to Islam, was asked which of the two readings of the Qur'aan he preferred, that is, the reading of Zaid or that of Ibn Mas'ud, he replied the latter, adding that whenever Gabriel revealed or recited the Qur'aan to Muhammad during Ramadan each year, Ibn Mas'ud was the first to learn of it.”

Nowhere in this narration is the compilation of Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) impugned. That there existed different “readings” – the different Qira'ats – is not and has never been denied. A person's “preference” for any particular form of Qira'at among the official and authorized reciting can by no stretch of imagination or reason be considered to imply that the other forms were not authentic. Since Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) by Divine instructions granted permission for the Qur'aan Majeed to be recited in various forms, the Sahaabah chose and adopted the form which appealed most to them. Their individual preferences for a particular Qira'at form can never be interpreted to mean that the other accredited forms were false or not sanctioned. The Hadith literature explicitly makes mention of the various forms sanctioned by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Gilchrist's deliberate silence and side-stepping of these narrations regarding the sanctioned forms of “variant readings” portrays his biased attitude and his desire to pedal his theories on the basis of “pure speculation”, dismissing all the Hadith facts which do not serve the purpose of his theories and opinions. If Abu Zabyan preferred Ibn Mas'ud's Qira'at, others preferred the Qira'at of authorities other than Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ud (Radiallahu anhu). Such individual preference cannot be construed to imply rejection of

the other forms of recital authentically attributed to Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

THE MANSUKHUT TILAAWAH VERSES

Gilchrist attempts to assail the authenticity of the Qur'aan Majeed by reference to the verses pertaining to the Aayat of Rajm (the Stoning Verses). Stating his case, Gilchrist says:

“Widely reported in the Hadith is a tradition which makes Umar report that the punishment for adultery, according to the Kitab Allah, the “Book of Allah”, was death by stoning, notwithstanding the verse found in the Qur'aan today which prescribes a different penalty.”

After referring to narrations pertaining to Rajm, Gilchrist states his conclusion as follows:

“The widespread stoning of adulterers in Muhammad’s time does tend to imply that the verse disclosed by Umar was originally a part of the Qur'aan text. If so, it is just one of those passages now excluded from the Qur'aan (more will be mentioned shortly), proving that the Qur'aan text, as we have it today, is somewhat incomplete.”

In citing the verses of Rajm in his attempt to assail the authenticity of the Qur'aan, Gilchrist has portrayed colossal ignorance of the history of the Qur'aan. It was never denied that the verses pertaining to Rajm constituted part of the Qur'aan. Even to this day, the punishment for married people guilty of adultery is stoning to death. The punishment prescribed in the Qur'aan for adultery does not conflict with the punishment prescribed in the verses of Rajm (stoning). The punishment for adultery stated in the Qur'aan applies to unmarried persons committing the abomination of adultery. The Aayaat on punishment for adultery, found in the Qur'aan mention the infliction of lashes while the Rajm verses – not found in the Qur'aan – apply to married people. There is, therefore, no conflict between the two sets of verses dealing with the sin of

adultery. The question arising now is: Why are the verses of Rajm not to be found in the Qur'aan which we have with us?

Verse 106 of Surah Baqarah reads:

“Whatever verse we abrogate or cause to be forgotten, we bring another better than it or like it. What, do you know, that verily, Allah has power over everything!”

Abrogation of verses by Allah Ta'ala during the time of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) while the incidence of Wahi (Revelation) was in progress is a fact well-known to all. The abovementioned Qur'aanic verse states this abrogation or cancellation of verses. Such abrogation is described in detail in the Hadith literature. The verses of Rajm referred to by Gilchrist are not news. The abrogation of the verses in relation to recitation is not a secret discovered by Gilchrist or by Jeffrey or by some other enemy of Islam. The Qur'aan Majeed itself mentions the abrogation of verses. Such abrogation was not by the Sahaabah. The abrogation was by Wahi and applied only to the time of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Abrogation (Naskh) applied to hukm (effect) and to tilaawat (recitation). Certain verses were abrogated with regard to hukm, but not tilaawat. Other verses were abrogated with regard to tilaawat, but not hukm. The verses of stoning fall in the latter category and are known as Mansukhut Tilaawah, i.e. their tilaawat has been cancelled while the law expounded in them has been retained. The fact that the Sahaabah did not dispute regarding the abrogation of the stoning verses, clearly proves that the cancellation of the tilaawat of these verses was a well-established fact among them. Not a single authority of Qira'at among the Sahaabah taught the recitation of the Rajm verses or of any other Mansukhut Tilwaat verses. In spite of the fact that the Rajm verses were not obscure verses unknown to the Sahaabah, we find that Hadhrat Zaid did not include them in the copy compiled by order of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu anhu) nor do we find Hadhrat Umar (Radiallahu anhu) who was jointly appointed with Hadhrat Zaid, making a case for the inclusion of these verses in the official copy compiled under

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Abu Bakr's instruction. Again, despite the knowledge which all the Sahaabah had of the Rajm verses and inspite of the fact that punishment for married adulterers was always stoning to death, no attempt was made to include these verses in the standardized copy of Hadhrat Uthmaan (radhiallah anhu). This bears out amply the explicit mention in the Hadith literature that the verses of stoning were among the abrogated verses (Mansukhut Tilaawat).

It is highly unreasonable for a critic of Islam to cite the verse of stoning with a view to impugn the authenticity of the Qur'aan. Among the assumptions and presumptions presented by Gilchrist to assail the Qur'aan's authenticity, his conclusion based on the Mansukhut Tilaawat Aayaat is about the flimsiest for the following reasons:

- These verses were well-known by the Sahaabah
- The punishment mentioned in these verses was official law and remains so to this day in the Shariah.
- Inspite of Hadhrat Abu Bakr, Umar, Zaid, Uthmaan and all others having knowledge of these verses, no attempt was ever made to include these verses in either the manuscripts compiled by order of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu anhu) or the standardized copy of Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu).
- There never existed any difference among the Sahaabah on the fact that these verses were among the Mansukhut Tilaawat verses.

It now rests on Gilchrist to provide us with authentic Hadith literature as evidence to prove his claim that the exclusion of the stoning verses constitutes unauthorized deletion from the Qur'aan. The Hadith literature explains the abrogation of verses – abrogation stated in the Qur'aan. Let Gilchrist refer to the Hadith literature and not “dismiss these evidences in favour of pure speculation” and fanciful thinking.

Once a verse has been abrogated on the authority of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), it cannot be included in the Qur'aanic text any longer. The matter is simple to

understand and it explains the total lack of dispute among the Sahaabah regarding the mansukhut Tilaawat verses.

THE DIFFERENCES IN QIRAT

In a section under the heading: “VARIANT READINGS IN THE QUR’AAN”, Gilchrist mentions some differences in words between the Qira’at of Hadhrat Ibn Mas’ud (Radiallahu anhu) and the Uthmaani standardized compilation. On the basis of this attempt Gilchrist endeavours to disprove the authenticity of the Qur’aan. It has been repeatedly explained in the foregoing pages that these differences in Qira’at were sanctioned by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), hence all the Sahaabah accepted the various Qira’ats (variant reading) as authentic. It has never been claimed that the differences in the various forms of recital pertain only to pronunciation as Gilchrist alleges. The Hadith literature explains the various type of differences. This has already been explained earlier in this booklet. The only way for Gilchrist to assail the authenticity of the Qur’aan from this angle is for him to produce authentic Ahadith claiming that some Sahaabah had adopted unauthorized forms for recitation. But, he has absolutely no hope of locating any such evidence in the Hadith. Harping on the “variant readings” as a basis to disprove the Qur’aan authenticity will not assist Gilchrist to achieve his aim since the “variant readings” have never been denied by the authorities of Islam. On the contrary, the authenticity of the variant readings, be it reading of Ibn Mas’ud (radhiallahu anhu), Ubay (Radiallahu anhu), Zaid (Radiallahu anhu) or of any other Sahabi, is vigorously canvassed by Islam.

Sight must not be lost of the actual charge which the enemies of Islam are leveling against the Qur’aan Majeed. The charge is that the present Qur’aan in our possession is not the full and perfect Qur’aan which was proclaimed by Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). But proof for this charge has not been forthcoming from the enemies. They have merely sought to befuddle others by referring to the existence of other

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authentic Qira'at (variant readings). The existence of other sanctioned forms of recitation is not evidence for the claim that the Uthmaani version is not authentic or not complete. The Hadith literature which Gilchrist concedes to be the only source to consult, abundantly proves that the Uthmaani compilation is directly linked to Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The Chain, therefore, has no weak link as alleged by Gilchrist. So strong is this Chain of authority that even Gilchrist concedes:

“There may be one standard text of the Qur'aan today...”

“... the caliphate of Uthman when the text was finally standardized into the form in which it appears today.”

So strong is the Chain that even Gilchrist and all forces inimical to the Qur'aan Majeed have failed miserably to fault the Uthmaani compilation which exists with us in perfect exactness even after fourteen centuries and which will exist in the world until the Last Day.

UTHMAAN'S MOTIVE

Manufacturing a motive for the standardization of the Qur'aan Majeed by Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu), Gilchrist comes up with the following baseless and absurd argument:

“The purpose, therefore, of Uthman's decree was not just to standardize a text to the Qur'aan for the whole Muslim world but to remove with one stroke the growing influence of the qurra and to nullify the threat that they posed. Quite clearly the caliph sought to undermine their authority in religious matters by destroying their Qur'aanic esteem.”

Indeed, Gilchrist has descended to ludicrous levels in presenting this theory. What evidence is there to even remotely suggest that the despicable theory offered by Gilchrist was Hadhrat Uthmaan's (Radiallahu anhu) motive for ordering the compilation of the standard copy. What has been written by Gilchrist in this passage is plain drivel and pure speculation, yet he ventures to describe his dilation as “evidences”!. No student

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of history who possesses any respect for the truth will ever uphold the ridiculous and blatantly false motive attributed to Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) by Gilchrist and other enemies of Islam.

By what stretch of imagination could the influence of the qurra be removed with “one stroke” by the imposition of the standard copy of the Qur'aan? How on earth was the standardized copy supposed to undermine the authority of the qurra? The elimination of the written records of the qurra could never secure the elimination of their specific form of Qira'at from their hearts and minds. The decree of standardization in no way affected the authority or position of the qurra teaching the Qur'aan all over the Islamic empire. No Qaari was dismissed by the decree of standardization. They remained in their positions. They retained whatever following they had. None of them ever vied with the Khalifah in the political domain as the enemies of Islam and the fabricators of this despicable motive wish us to believe.

Assuming the fabricated motive attributed to Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) to be a fact, what reasonable explanation can the enemies offer for the total endurance of the Uthmaani version even after his enemies murdered him? Even after he was martyred by unscrupulous assassins, the compilation left by him remained a perpetual and an unchallenged entity. A variety of forces inimical to Islam reared their heads in the guise of Muslims after the murder of Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu). Numerous deviated sects sprang up, openly rejecting the teachings of the Sahaabah, but, all sects – even those who strayed far from the Path of Islam – adhered to the Uthmaani compilation. It is illogic and bigoted to believe that the enemies of Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) and the many deviated sects which later developed would have retained the Uthmaani compilation if they had reason to impeach the authenticity of the text. Thus, we see that inspite of mighty political upheavals developing in Islam after the murder of Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) as well as fanatical sects

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such as the Khaarjis arising, the standardized copy remained unassailed and intact to this day.

According to Gilchrist, Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) was a “most unpopular caliph”. But, inspite of this suppose unpopularity, his compilation enjoyed the highest degree of popularity and approval among friend and foe alike. If there was indeed any substance in the claim that the imposition of the standard copy by Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) was unpopular and detested, it could never have been accorded such popular acceptance. Deviated and inimical sects and other treacherous forces within the ranks of Muslims would never have adopted the Uthmaani compilation as the standard copy. Even after the final annihilation of the dynasty of Bani Umayya the Uthmaani compilation continued to enjoy its unique supremacy since it was the only compilation accepted and approved of by the entire Ummah. Even the Abbasi Khulafa who had displaced the Umayyad reign retained the Uthmaani compilation. All the facts conclusively prove that the motive of Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) is unimpeachable. His intention in decreeing the standardized copy was not contaminated by any worldly motive. In view of the unanimous acceptance of Uthmaan's sincerity and purity of intention coupled to the authenticity of the compilation, the entire world of Islam in all ages and of all political and religious shades, upheld the validity and authenticity of the Uthmaani copy.

Gilchrist himself contradicts his own advice which he gives regarding Hadith evidence and pure speculation. As mentioned elsewhere in this treatise, Gilchrist portrays himself as the negator of the Qur'aan's authenticity on the basis of Hadith literature. But, whenever he discerns that any Hadith goes counter to his theories, he conveniently turns a blind eye to such Ahadith. It is queer that Gilchrist, after having stated the causes which led to the Uthmaani compilation, attempts to introduce an entirely different dimension to underpin the motive which gave rise to the action taken by Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu). On page 6 of this pamphlet, Gilchrist states:

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“In the meantime, however, it is of great interest to us to find that during the reign of the third caliph Uthman, this copy (i.e. Abu Bakr's) was brought to the fore as word was brought from the out-lying provinces that the Muslims in these areas are reciting the Qur'aan in different ways. The sequel is set out in the following tradition:

Hudhaifa was afraid of their (the people of Sha'm and Iraq) differences in the recitation of the Qur'aan, so he said to Uthman, 'O Chief of the Believers! Save this nation before they differ about the book as the Jews and the Christians did before.' So Uthman sent a message to Hafsa saying, 'Send us the manuscripts of the Qur'aan so that we may compile the Qur'aanic materials in perfect copies..”

Gilchrist here concedes that the motive for Uthmaan's compilation was that the Qur'aan was being recited in different ways. Further, it is acknowledged by Gilchrist that the Uthmaani compilation commenced in consequence of the information and exhortation of Hadhrat Hudhaifa (Radiallahu anhu). The differences spoken of in the above narration refer to different authorized Qira'ats of which the two communities were not fully aware. The “differences” do not refer to any supposed accretions which crept into the Qur'aan as Gilchrist seeks to convey. Furthermore, the people of Iraq and Sha'm who were disputing regarding the Qira'ats were not Sahaabah. They were students of different Masters of Qira'at who imparted only a specific form of recitation.

The Hadith narrations establish conclusively that the cause which induced Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) to order the preparation of a standardized copy was the disputes which developed among people not versed in the authorized forms of Qira'ats. It is thus blatantly false to attribute any worldly or political motive to this momentous undertaking of Ameerul Mu'mineen Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu). The charge Gilchrist levels against Hadhrat Uthmaan (Radiallahu anhu) is totally unfounded. Not an iota of evidence exists in the Ahadith to uphold this fallacy.

SUMMARY

The summary of this whole discussion is as follows:

1. Gilchrist claims that the present Qur'aan Majeed is not the complete Qur'aan which existed in the time of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).
2. Gilchrist claims to base all his conclusions on the Hadith Literature.
3. In support of his claim, Gilchrist furnishes only two factors: (a) variant Readings mentioned in the Hadith literature (b) Exclusion of certain verses from the Qur'aan Majeed.
4. The variant readings cited so copiously by Gilchrist do not support his claim since all such variant readings (Qira'ats) were authorized forms of recitation sanctioned by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The variant readings were not later accretions to the Qur'aan. They were taught and allowed by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) himself.
5. The verses which were excluded from the Qur'aan text, are verses which Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) himself excluded after Allah Ta'ala cancelled their recitation. Such abrogated verses are known as mansukhut Tilaawat. There was no dispute whatever among the Sahaabah in this regard. It was an unanimously known fact to the Sahaabah that the mansukhut Tilaawat verses do not form part of the Qur'aanic text after the decree of abrogation.

By the Fadhl of Allah Ta'ala it has been conclusively proved that whatever theories tendered by Gilchrist and other enemies of the Qur'aan to impugn the authenticity of the Qur'aan are pure speculation, wishful and bigoted thinking unsubstantiated by any evidence. Allah Ta'ala is the Guardian of the Qur'aan.

WHAT THE CRITICS SAY ABOUT THE QUR'AAN

Dr. Steingoss says:

'We may well say the Qur'aan is one of the grandest books ever written... such a work is a problem of the highest to every thoughtful observer of the destinies of mankind.'

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'That the best of Arab witnesses have never succeeded in producing anything equal to the merits in Qur'aan.. To compose such revelations at will was beyond the power of the most expert literary artist.'

-Encyclopedia Britannica

'However often we turn to it (Qur'aan)... it soon attracts, astounds and in the end enforces our reverence... Thus this Book will go on exercising through all ages a most potent influence.' -Goethe.

'The age of the Vedas Puranas is gone. Now the Qur'aan is the only book to guide the world.' -Guru Nanak (founder of Sikhism)

'The miracle of Islam par excellence is the Qur'aan. How could this marvelous book be the work of Muhammad, an illiterate Arab.. The Qur'aan could not be the work of an uneducated man.. unless he had the help of the Almighty.' -Dr Laura V. Vaglieri.

THE QUR'AAN'S CHALLENGE TO THE WORLD

'By a fortune absolutely unique in history, Mohammed is a threefold founder of a nation, of an empire and of a religion. The Qur'aan is a Book which is a poem , a code of laws, a book of common prayer, all in one and is revered by a large section of the human race as a miracle of purity and style, of wisdom and of truth. It is the one miracle claimed by Mohammed – his 'standing miracle' as he called it; and a miracle indeed it is.'

-Reverend Bosworth Smith.

'The best Arab writers have never succeeded in producing anything equal in merit to the Qur'aan itself.'

- Palmer.

'There is probably in the world no other book (Qur'aan) which has remained twelve (now 14) centuries with so pure a text.'

-Sir William Muir.

OPINION OF NON-MUSLIMS ABOUT ISLAM AND THE HOLY QUR'AAN

‘Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images; the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammed. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he?’ -Lamartine, *Historie de la Turquie*.

‘It (Qur’aan) is a literal revelation of God, dictated to Muhammed by Gabriel, perfect in every letter. It is an ever-present miracle witnessing to itself and Muhammed, the prophet of God. Its miraculous quality resides partly in its style, so perfect and lofty, that neither men nor jinn could produce a single chapter to compare with its briefest chapter, and partly in its content of teaching, prophecies about the future, and amazing accurate information such as the illiterate Muhammed could never have gathered of his own accord.’ -Harry Gaylord Dorman.

‘All those who are acquainted with the Qur’aan, in Arabic agree in praising the beauty of this religious book; its grandeur of form is so sublime that no translation into any European language can allow us to appreciate it.’ - Edward Montet.

‘There is no religion which is maligned by the ignorant as is Islam, yet if people only knew it is the only true solution for the problems of socialism in as much as it is the religion of the strong for the weak, of the rich for the poor... I do not think I need say much about the universal brotherhood of man in Islam. It is a recognized fact.’ -Sir Charles Edward Archibald Hamilton.

‘Islam which claims allegiance of seven hundred million souls, is the ONLY SOLUTION for all the ills of the world. This is no idle boast on my part. Events are proving it. Every thoughtful observer of what is going on in Western Asia and Africa can appreciate its truth. For it is in Islam only that the idea of a real

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material league of nations has been approached in the right and practicable way.'

-Sir Thomas Arnold.

(The Preaching of Islam, London 1913)

'Islamic brotherhood is a social an spiritual fact. Islam is not only a faith, it is a legal system and a social system as well.'

-Reverend Murray Titus.

'A false man found a Religion! Why a false man cannot build a brick house? If he does not know and follow truly the properties of mortar, burnt clay and whatever else he works with, it is no house that he builds, but a rubbish heap. It will not stand for twelve (now fourteen) centuries to lodge a 189 million (now 900 million), it will fall straightaway.'

-Thomas Carlyle.

'Say; "If the whole of mankind and Jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Qura'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support.'

Al-Qur'aan 17:88

'And if you are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant, then produce a Sura like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers (if there are any) besides Allah, if your (doubts) are true.

But if ye cannot – of a surety ye cannot then fear the Fire whose fuel is Men and Stones – which is prepared for those who reject Faith.'

Al-Qur'aan 2:23-24

'This Qur'aan is not such that can be produced by other than Allah.'

Al-Qur'aan 10:37

1400 years have elapsed since the Qur'aan first issued the above challenge to the world but not a soul has been able to produce something similar or better than the Qur'aan. This is a LIVING TESTIMONY of the DIVINE ORIGIN of the Qur'aan!